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disques

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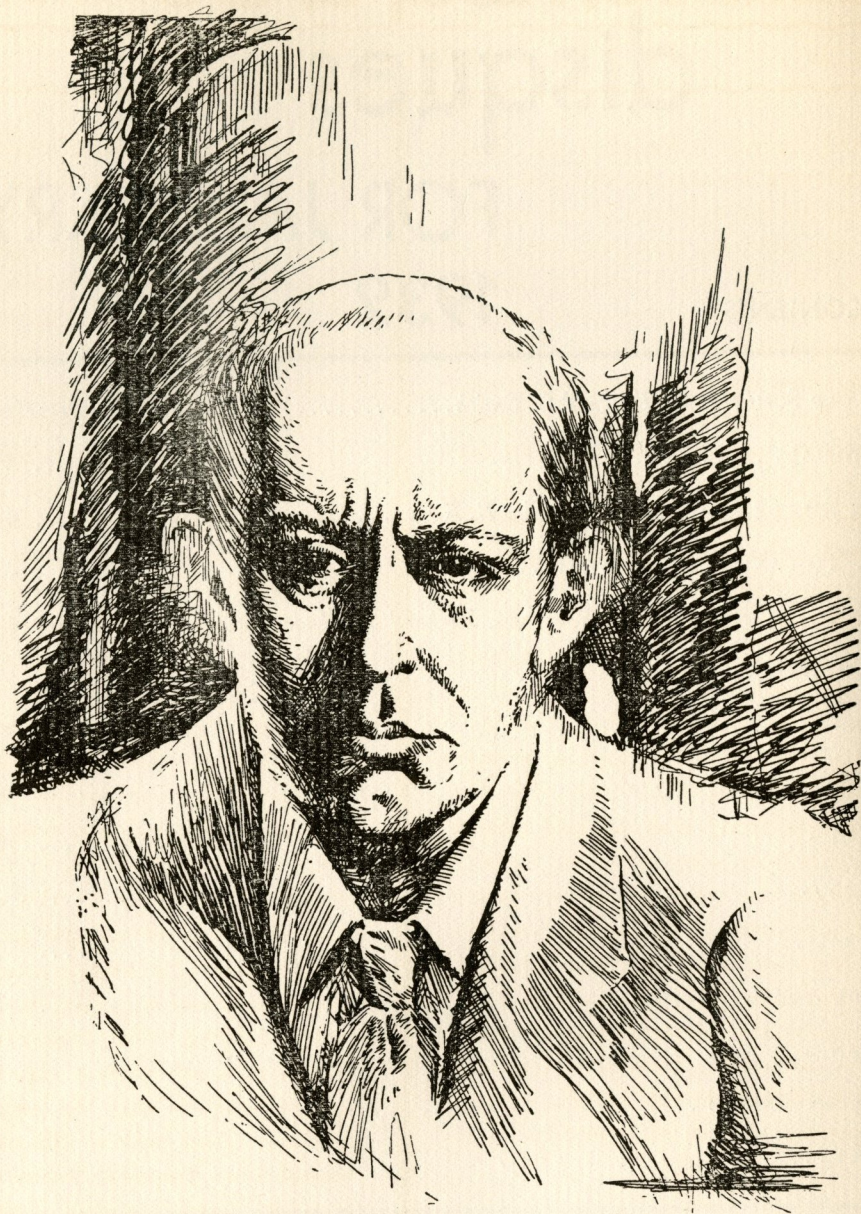
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RICHARD J. MAGRUDER, EDITOR

EDWARD C. SMITH, ART EDITOR



LAST month, discussing the long-playing records in this place, we asked for the opinions of our readers on the subject, promising to print some of the representative letters. The response to this request was surprisingly large,—amazingly large, in fact, when it is considered that as yet very few people have had an opportunity to hear the long-playing records. A number of highly interesting letters, bringing up various important points related to the long-playing process, came in. Most of them, unfortunately, were extremely long, so long, indeed, that it would obviously be impossible to print them all in full. This is regrettable, for they make very interesting and instructive reading. We have, however, done the next best thing and printed salient excerpts from some of them, striving to retain the most important points and eliminating, as far as possible, duplications and irrelevant material. We therefore offer our apologies for the inevitable butchering of what were obviously carefully prepared and well-thought-out letters, written unquestionably in all sincerity.



The net impression received after reading through this mass of correspondence was not a very exhilarating

one,—though it was, of course, gratifying in the extreme to have visible evidence of the by no means inconsiderable interest manifested in the phonograph. These letters proved, if nothing else, that incontestably there is still abundant interest in records and indeed in almost all phases of the phonograph industry. Some of them covered as many as four pages of typescript, single-spaced. Now, obviously, a man has to be pretty thoroughly interested in order to write that much, especially when his only reward is to see it ruthlessly butchered when it appears in print. This interest, however, was really the only genuinely cheering feature about these letters. The general opinion, emphatically expressed by every one of our correspondents, was that the program transcriptions, as they now stand, are inferior to the standard records, their advantages in playing continuously for fifteen minutes not being sufficient to offset the flaws in the recording. Not one correspondent, it is worth noting, expressed entire satisfaction with the long-playing process. And most of the objections found were plausible, eminently reasonable ones, ranging from well-founded complaints about the recording to the lack of proper facilities on which to play the new discs. With

most of these objections we agree, though with some reservations. In the vast majority of cases, of course, the program transcriptions are plainly inferior to the standard records from which they were copied. But there are several that seem just about as good as the standard records: for example, Beethoven's Fifth (a recording made directly for the long-playing records), Haydn's *Clock* Symphony (transcribed from the standard set), Chopin's Sonata in B Flat Minor, Op. 35 (another transcription), and Strawinsky's *Petrouchka* Suite (still another transcription). As was stated in last month's editorial, these records, when played on the proper machines, seem to give as satisfactory results as the standard discs. One or two correspondents attempted to play the program transcriptions on electrical machines not adapted for long-playing, reducing the speed of their motors to what they hoped was $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. This cannot be done with any degree of accuracy, and so their estimates of the long-playing records are not altogether fair, just as an opinion of a modern standard record played on a 1925 portable machine would not be of much value,—by which we certainly do not mean to imply that our correspondents' electrical machines are to be compared with a 1925 portable. But until they are properly adjusted for long-playing, they cannot possibly be expected to give acceptable results with the program transcriptions.



While the general tenor of these letters was rather depressing, many of our correspondents expressed the belief that the long-playing records, though issued much too soon, have fine possibilities and will, when perfected, mark a great step forward in recorded music. One correspondent, annoyed by the defects in the program transcriptions, concluded his letter thus: "Incidentally, if the long-players are still imperfect, why have they been put on the market . . . ? Why doesn't RCA Victor do its experimenting in its laboratories instead of in its customers' homes and pocketbooks? I should really and truly like to see the official answer to this question." On the surface that seems to be a very damning indictment, but examined more closely it is found to be less serious. That the long-playing records are still imperfect cannot, of course, be denied; and that they were issued prematurely is likewise clear. But the standard records, too, are imperfect. Had the manufacturers waited to bring out the standard records until they were "perfect," we would doubtless still be waiting for them. The first program transcriptions maintain a higher—a much higher—standard of excellence than the first examples of electrical recording maintained. The failure of the long-playing records to come up to expectations is naturally extremely disappointing, but we are inclined to believe that it is not so serious and devastating a failure as some make it out to be. It would be much different if there were no standard records, or if the companies had stopped releasing standard records. Then, forced to turn to the program transcriptions for recorded music, we would naturally be somewhat inconvenienced by their present shortcomings. But standard records are still being released in the usual quantities, and so no one is compelled to depend upon the long-playing records for his recorded music. The standard records have not yet been replaced, and the program transcriptions are not being offered as substitutes for them. Consequently, it seems to us that some of the criticism directed toward them is excessively harsh. The important thing now is for the manufacturers to improve the

program transcriptions, issue an attractive catalogue of new recordings, bring out a satisfactory and inexpensive two-speed motor for the owners of electrical machines not adapted for long-playing (which appears to have been done), and reduce, if possible, the prices of the standard records, as has recently been done in England. These things, if the contents of our correspondents' letters are an accurate reflection of the attitude of American collectors toward recorded music, must be done. And collectors, in turn, should assiduously cultivate the admirable virtue of patience, a quality indispensable to anyone interested in the phonograph.



Leaving, for the moment, the mechanical side of the long-playing process, we should like to turn to another matter brought up by one of our correspondents, a matter that, as the long-playing records gradually get established, will become increasingly important. "This is the question," our correspondent writes, "of hashing together a lot of miscellaneous music on one record and compelling the purchaser to take the whole lot or nothing. The companies have always had a theory that *O Sole Mio* on one four-minute side would help sell *Wohin nun Tristan scheidet* on the other, to exaggerate a bit. What are they going to do with thirty-two minutes for their playtoy? The imagination recoils! Why should I have to pay for and store Suk's *Fairy Tales* and Dvorák's hackneyed *Slavonic Dance* in order to get the *Carneval Overture*? As long as the one is available without the other, you can bet I shall not buy the whole thing, especially when prices begin to come down in the field of standard records." The fact that our correspondent could solve his problem very readily by obtaining standard records of the *Overture* by Goossens, Harty or Coates, all of which are immeasurably superior to the Stock version, doesn't alter the appositeness of his example. In fact, we thoroughly agree with him. One of the principal charms of the phonograph is that it enables you to select your own program—in the sales-talk of one of the manufacturers, you have "the music you want when you want it." This is an excellent slogan, and, what is more, a true one, but should the policy of issuing long-playing records containing a group of unrelated selections—such a grouping, for example, as that mentioned by our correspondent—be carried to inordinate lengths, this slogan will become meaningless. Instead of selecting your own program, it will already have been selected for you, and that, most of us will agree, is thoroughly irritating and tends to reduce the phonograph to the level of the radio. In order to play the *Slavonic Dance*, to revert once again to our correspondent's example, you will first have to plow through Suk's *Fairy Tales*. This may not be objectionable one time, but it is pretty certain that there will be occasions when you will want the Dvorák without the Suk—and the only way that is possible is to try to find the first groove of the Dvorák and start the record in the middle. This, not to mention the annoyance it involves, is by no means advisable, as the chances are you will injure the record grooves. Each of these brief selections occupies one side of a standard 12-inch record. Nothing is gained by having them both issued on one side of a single 10-inch long-playing record. The long-playing process has plenty of valid uses. For recording complete symphonies, sonatas, concertos, operas, quartets, quintets, etc., it can be utilized very effectively. But to group several miscellaneous selections, which properly belong on standard records, on a long-playing disc is pointless and absurd. The chances of all the selections and the method of grouping appealing

to any very large number of collectors are pretty slim. It is to be hoped that the manufacturers, for their own good as well as ours, will give this matter thorough consideration before issuing the next batch of program transcriptions.



Thus far the only way it has been possible to play the program transcriptions has been with one of the new RCA Victor machines. Last September it was announced that an inexpensive device, designed to convert a 78 r.p.m. motor into a two-speed motor, would shortly be released for those who already owned satisfactory electrical machines. It was then found that motors of the induction disc type generally used in electrical phonographs are not sufficiently constant in speed when geared down from 78 to $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. to reproduce the program transcriptions satisfactorily. In place of this device, RCA Victor has just announced a new motor board assembly, consisting of a panel upon which is mounted a synchronous type motor equipped with a speed reducer and clutch, permitting of turntable speeds of both 78 and $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. Tone arm counterbalancing weights, highly necessary for the program transcriptions, will also be supplied. This assembly will be furnished in three types: (1) suitable for Victor Model RE-57 and Radiola 86; (2) suitable for RCA Victor Model RE-73; (3) the "Universal" motor board assembly. This last type will have an oversized panel, the dimensions of which will be about 19" x 16". The motor will be so mounted that the panel can be cut down to minimum dimensions of approximately 16" x 13". This type has been designed so that it can be fitted to the various other electrical phonographs now being used. It is believed that, with one or another of these assemblies, practically any old type electrical phonograph issued in the past three years can be fitted for long-playing. The list price of these motor board assemblies, according to the announcement, will be \$25, less installation charges.



Manufacturing and sales rights to Brunswick, Vocalion and Melotone records,
(Continued on page 487)

SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotopia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

The Rise of Schönberg

By MAURICE B. KATZ

Since the days of the famous controversies between the Piccinnists and Gluckists, and those between Wagnerites and Anti-Wagnerites, no composer has aroused so much acrimonious debate nor has any stepped on the toes of the musical Philistines so much as Arnold Schönberg. To Henry Finck he was nothing but a charlatan; to James Huneker he was an enigma; and even his admirer, Carl Engel, confesses that there is in Schönberg's latest music not a little that he still finds somewhat difficult to grasp. When the Quintet for woodwinds was played a few years ago at an International Festival for Chamber Music, one of his faithful disciples, Anton von Webern, explained to some musical celebrities present that he did not expect the work to be understood by them at that time, that it represented a complete break with the past, that it would take a while for them to become familiar with the new language. *Zukunftsmusik* with a vengeance!

Unlike Strawinsky and other moderns, who become somewhat penitent and adopt neoclassicisms and other tricks of trade, Schönberg refuses to look backward. His works from the first opus to the latest show a logical unfoldment of harmonic, rhythmic, and contrapuntal evolution, which is characteristic of all great musicians. Like them he also has his three periods, having begun his latest atonal period only after completely exhausting the possibilities of old forms and tonalities which gave the world such accepted masterpieces as his First and Second String Quartets; the sextet *Verklärte Nacht*; the Chamber Symphony; the stupendous *Gurrelieder*; the symphonic tone poem *Pelléas and Mélisande*; some songs; and the choral work, *Friede auf Erden*.

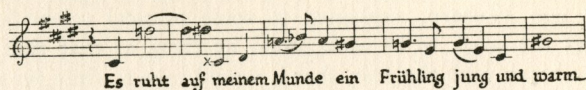
But even in the earliest songs and the string sextet which are reminiscent of Wagner, Strauss, and Mahler, traces of the future Schönberg are to be found here and there. In the songs, for instance, the piano ceases to be a mere accompaniment, assumes an individuality of its own, and becomes quite polyphonic and orchestral in its texture, the score consisting of compact little figures, motives and counter melodies enveloping the voice. (The vocalist's bane, by the way.)

After the string sextet came the biggest of Schönberg's works, the *Gurrelieder*, written for five solo voices, three four-part male choirs, and a mixed choir of eight parts together with an instrumental assortment, including six timpani, glockenspiel, xylophone, gong, and large iron chains. Obviously, this is the work that would create a sensation and did when it was given by Mengelberg in Amsterdam. But, strangely enough, the sensation was all in the composer's favor, for the *Gurrelieder* elicited the admiration even of musical die-hards. Schönberg's biographer and propagandist, Egon Wellesz, feels that this melodrama is the key to the understanding of his master's later works. Its remarkable richness of tone color, its wealth of counterpoint and polyphony, exceed anything done by his friend Gustav Mahler, by whom he was influenced to a great extent. No matter how programmatic the music is, the sense of form and unity is always intact in Schönberg, the music a law unto itself, so that it may be enjoyed without reference to action.

The next composition, Schönberg's only symphonic poem—*Pelléas and Mélisande*

after the drama by Maeterlinck—is even more dazzling in its contrapuntal virtuosity. Its chief characteristic is this: that while the music follows closely the story of the drama, as many as five different themes sometimes appear, first in succession, then simultaneously, each bringing its own counter motives and imitations.

In the following groups of songs (Op. 6: Eight Songs for Voice and Piano; Op. 8: Six Songs with Orchestra) Schönberg's later characteristics are in full view, especially in the voice part which becomes more and more expressive, the orchestra or piano serving only to supply the harmonic atmosphere and the polyphonic web to the voice. The peculiar large skips of the intervals in the melody already begin to appear in Op. 6, and in the *Chamber Symphony* for fifteen solo instruments (later scored for full orchestra).



Despite the complexity of these works, Schönberg does not yet relinquish the key signature, and although they are all impregnated with his own strong individuality the conventional forms are not abolished.

II

With the publication of the three piano pieces (Op. 11, 1909) Schönberg threw a bomb into the camp of those who guard the sacred laws of music, an explosion from which they have not yet recovered. At once the musical world divided itself into two hostile camps. To his detractors Schönberg became a figure of derision, while to his enthusiasts he became the inaugurator of a new era of liberation through self-expression. With these pieces Schönberg begins his atonal period, the influence of which hardly any living composer can deny. The atonal idiom has been adopted unreservedly by the new generation of Austrian and German composers, entering even the field of grand opera—cf. *Wozzeck*—through Schönberg's pupil, Alban Berg. These pieces, Op. 11, were first performed by Rudolf Reti in 1909 at a concert for the *Verein für Kunst und Kultur*, where the first part of the *Gurrelieder* with piano accompaniment and the set of fifteen songs after Stefan George's *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten* were also played. On the program for the evening appeared a preface, excerpts from which may give an idea of the Messianic intensity of the man.

In the *George Lieder* I have succeeded for the first time in approaching an ideal of expression and form that had hovered before me for some years. Hitherto I had not sufficient strength to realize that ideal. Now, however, that I have definitely started on my journey, I may confess to having broken off the bonds of a bygone æsthetic; and if I am striving toward a goal that seems to me to be certain, nevertheless I already feel the opposition that I shall have to overcome. I feel also with what heat even those of the feeblest temperament will reject my work, and I suspect that even those who have hitherto believed in me will not be willing to perceive the necessity of this development.

Therefore it seems opportune to show, through the performance of the *Gurrelieder*, which found no friends eight years ago, but which today have many, that it is not lack of invention or technical skill, nor of the knowledge of the other demands of contemporary æsthetics, that has urged me in this direction, but that I am following an inner compulsion that is stronger than education, and am obeying a law that is natural to me, and therefore stronger than my artistic training.

In order to have a clear understanding of these remarkable pieces it is necessary to grasp some fundamental principles on which Schönberg's art is based and which he elucidates in his *Harmonielehre*. One of the most important of these is the distinction between consonance and dissonance. To state it briefly and directly: consonance is a close and simple relation of the overtones with the ground note, while dissonance is a more distant and complex relation. Since the human ear is a very pliant organ, and since therefore all that is necessary for re-creation of a work of art is the perception of relationships of the notes and phrases among themselves, the difference between consonance and dissonance is aesthetically non-existent. The historic sense in music will certainly serve to show that the borderline between consonance and dissonance has been bit by bit erased. Why, we well may ask, should dissonances be considered ugly when the only difference between them and consonances is quantitative? As Schönberg puts it:

Beauty appears only from the moment when the unproductive begin to miss it. Before that point it does not exist, for the artist has found no conscious need of it. He is satisfied with truthfulness, with having expressed himself, and having said that which had to be said according to the laws of his nature . . . The form of beauty that one can have, which consists of fixed rules and fixed forms, is merely the yearning of one who is unproductive. For the artist this is of secondary importance, as indeed is every accomplishment, since the artist is content with aspiration, whereas the mediocre must have beauty . . .

The cry for beauty, it is Schönberg's viewpoint, then, is the desire for the familiar, for pleasure.

III

It must be remembered again and again that the evolution of the art of music consists of a wider and wider use of so-called discords. The division of intervals and chords into consonances and dissonances has always been an arbitrary affair dating most likely from the vocal origin of music when it was easy for a singer to reach an interval of a fourth or fifth, but quite difficult to leap to a major or minor seventh. The fact is, however, that the Chinese and other Orientals to whom western music is incomprehensible use and have been using for generations linear counterpoint and polyrhythms. Western music, following the Greek sense of order and simplicity, took a different course, but the bonds of tonality were bound to be rent asunder sooner or later. Scriabin and Strawinsky are milestones toward the logical development which matures with Schönberg's duodecuple scale, the present chromatic keyboard scale of twelve semitones, each of whose tones is treated as of equal importance, melodically and harmonically, with every other. Thus, Schönberg frees the harmonist from the tyranny of the tonic, dominant and subdominant chords which all the other chords must subserve.

Another thing to note as an approach to Schönberg is that although there is a clear melodic line discernible in all his work, it is interpenetrated by what is termed linear counterpoint: that is, the free motion of the different melodic lines in the atonal style. For Schönberg never thinks of a melody pure and simple, but always in so far as it is associated with counter-melodies which overlap each other. This idiom becomes quite pronounced in the later piano works (Opp. 23 and 25) which are more difficult to grasp than are the orchestral or chamber works, where the parts stand out more distinctly.

Still another bar to the easy understanding of Schönberg is the wide melodic skips of over an octave and sometimes as great as two or three octaves, extremely disconcerting to the novice. Schönberg, it appears, would have each note not only serve the phrase, but also stand clear in its own light. Hence, the distinction in registers.

After Op. 11 come the two songs, Op. 14, and the collection of fifteen songs after Stefan George's *Buch der Hängenden Gärten*, where Schönberg brings to fruition his individual conception of song form. With reference to the five orchestral pieces, Op. 16, the novel combinations of instruments must be noted. Schönberg treats each group of clarinets, oboes, flutes, etc., as solo instruments in a quintet.

We pass over the two operas *Erwartung* and *Glückliche Hand*, the six short piano pieces, Op. 19, the *Herzgewächse*, Op. 20 (based on one of Maeterlinck's poems), each in its way a step forward to the great and best known of Schönberg's works, *Pierrot Lunaire*. This is a setting of twenty-one poems after Albert Giraud, and composed for a soprano voice in *Sprechgesang* (song-speech), piano, flute alternating with piccolo, clarinet alternating with bass clarinet, violin alternating with viola, and violoncello. It is impossible to describe the effect produced on the listener by these few instruments. All preconceived theories and labels are forgotten, as the listener feels transported into a fantastic world of dreams from which he wakes up at the conclusion as from a sleep induced by a dose of opium. Schönberg succeeded in infusing such life into the rather trite and decadent poems by means of a few instruments that it seems nothing short of a miracle, especially considering the simple classic tools with which he worked. In the eighteenth piece, for instance—*Der Mondfleck*—he resorts to a trick of the old contrapuntists by introducing a double canon between piccolo and clarinet on the one hand, and violin and 'cello on the other. From the middle of the tenth bar all the music runs backwards, also in canonic form . . . But analysis is powerless to add up this sum. *Pierrot Lunaire* electrified audiences everywhere, and easily became the most popular of Schönberg's works, exerting a more profound influence than any composition of the modern school.

IV

The third period of Schönberg begins with the publication of the five piano pieces, Op. 23. Here the composer consolidates his position as a master of a new language. Due to the extraordinary freedom of his rhythms and the constant change of his time signature he is forced to invent suitable notation to indicate the strong and weak beats of the measure. In conventional music, written in 4/4 time, the strong beats are usually the first and third quarters of the measure. In Schönberg, since there is no regularly recurrent pulse, the accents are constantly misplaced. This is one of the many sources of mystification for the inexperienced listener and is part and parcel of the more general difficulty of recognizing the end of one phrase and period. (Atonal composers do not use the usual cadences and half cadences, nor do they end the phrase or period with sustained notes; neither do they separate one phrase from another by pauses, but plunge straight ahead until the end of a distinct section, which Schönberg always marks *ritenuto*.) For instance:

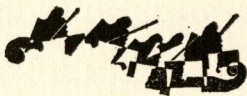


Here are the first seven measures of the Gigue in Op. 25, consisting of two phrases, the second phrase beginning with the fifth measure. The first four measures each contain an analogous figure ending on an accented note (the first measure on B flat, the second on E natural, etc.) divided by sixteenth rest notes. The fifth measure begins with an entirely different ascending figure in the treble which, from the seventh to the tenth measure, becomes a descending figure.

A close study of this composition makes it evident what a strong sense of unity pervades. Not a note can be added or subtracted. Here Schönberg has abjured the spirit of romanticism which was rampant in his earlier works, and the student will discover the same seriousness of purpose and austerity as in Bach, with whom Schönberg has much in common. Wellesz says:

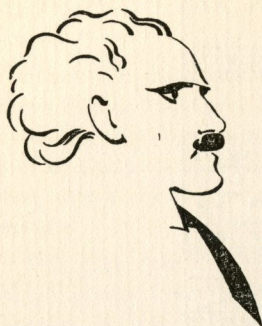
Whatever may be our attitude to these works, one thing is certain. An artist, who through the *Gurrelieder* and the D Minor Quartet, which are now universally recognized, has given proof of being in the front rank of composers of the present day, can claim that we should concur in anything that he now writes or may write in the future.

It is also certain that Schönberg will not change his style. He has too much artistic rectitude and martyr strength to do that. Rather it is our musical environment which will have to change in accordance with his personality, which is invincibly modifying or at least interpreting the course of musical evolution.



Mr. Toscanini

By DAVID EWEN



When I last met Mr. Toscanini I realized that he had almost overnight become an old man. Early last Spring, in New York, he seemed to be young, fresh, alive—so much so that more than one of his admirers commented that Mr. Toscanini would remain a young man for the rest of his life. But the events of late Spring and early Summer had broken him completely. And as we were sitting in the restaurant of the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, immediately after the performance of *Götterdämmerung* which concluded the first cycle, I realized that the maestro was growing old, terribly old. He was slouching in his seat, eating nothing, saying nothing, his face black with despair, his eyes intensely sad. He had been so sad and taciturn for many days. Obviously enough, he was very unhappy; I had never before seen him so morbid. He was disillusioned, and sick at heart. He was worn away in health—and his conducting arm was temporarily paralyzed. He was tired—physically, mentally, spiritually. He was pessimistic.

Toscanini is never very garrulous; certainly he never speaks about himself. When he is unhappy—as he was last Summer in Bayreuth—he becomes even more reserved and aloof, and enshrouds himself with an impenetrable silence. But all of us knew why Toscanini had aged overnight. He was a man without a country. Italy had rejected him last Spring, when he refused to play the Fascist Hymn. At that time the pain was not a poignant one because he was looking forward with eager eyes to his forthcoming visit to Bayreuth where he hoped his artistic integrity would receive the appreciation it deserved, where he hoped he could absorb himself with the task of creating great performances of Wagner before ears that could understand and appreciate his efforts. Toscanini does not receive any payment for his arduous labors at Bayreuth, notwithstanding the fact that he works harder there than anywhere else in the world. He wishes no payment except that he be permitted slavishly to produce his greatness without disturbance or hindrance. But his dream betrayed him—even at Bayreuth. Even at Bayreuth he encountered petty politics, politics which would not give him the casts he deserved and the number of rehearsals he needed. Not even Bayreuth, the most famous musical shrine in the world, was to be the haven for his high artistic ideals. Petty quarrels ensued; ugly words exchanged. And then Mr. Toscanini's resignation followed.

His disappointment, far more intense than any of us dared to confess, crushed him. He became an old man overnight. He was not wanted in Italy; he was not wanted in Bayreuth; he suspected that America, too, would soon begin grumbling at his fastidiousness and would demand that he become less meticulous. Rehearsals were very expensive—and there were far too many of them; the orchestra men complained that they were worked to death. . . . That same artistic integrity, therefore—that mania for perfection, that impatience with medio-

crities—which had made him the world's greatest conductor, now made him the world's unhappiest man. He was unhappy because the world asked far too little, and he insisted upon giving it too much. And he would make no compromises or concessions. He would have perfect performances at any price—even at the price of sacrificing every position he holds dear.

For a while there was talk among Toscanini's most intimate friends that the maestro would this year retire from all active musical activity. He would devote his remaining years towards rest, and perhaps towards phonographic recordings of his famous interpretations. Yet, when a dear friend of his asked him if this were true, Toscanini shrugged his shoulders, closed his eyes and raised his two hands as though in horror—a characteristic Toscanini gesture! No. Mr. Toscanini will not retire from music. He cannot. It is his entire life. He would be the most miserable man in the world divorced from his musical expression. Yet the world is too much in a hurry for Toscanini's painful and leisurely method of preparing his performances; the world is too impatient with his meticulous desire for perfection. And Toscanini will never compromise; for him it is either perfect performances—or no performances at all. It was the realization that he might have to choose the second alternative that broke his heart and his spirit.

II

There are many—and these include famous musicians—who look upon Mr. Toscanini's desire for perfection as an affectation. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Those who know Toscanini well know that the need for perfection is a second nature with him; he is wretched—miserably, hopelessly wretched—if even the slightest flaw creeps into his performances. I have been at his rehearsals in New York and in Bayreuth, and I have been given evidence again and again that Toscanini must have perfection. I have heard him rehearse the few notes of the off-stage horn-call in the end of the first act of *Tristan* for two hours, even though that passage is of very little musical importance. I have also heard him devote equal effort to a small flute passage in a tremendous *fortissimo* passage in Respighi's *Festa Romana*—even though the most discerning musical ear could not have extricated the sound of the flute from the boisterous maze of Respighi's intricate orchestration. To Toscanini there are no unimportant passages; no instrument has too negligible a section not to have it rehearsed minutely and carefully. As a matter of fact, Toscanini has said that the important passages of any symphony or opera will invariably take care of themselves, but it is the negligible section, or the unimportant passage, that requires painful rehearsing. And to Toscanini a minor passage is as important as a major one; he must have perfection even in the most minute details.

There is no happiness for Mr. Toscanini except when he attains that perfection which his sensitivity requires. I have seen him giggle like a schoolgirl, flushing with sheer delight, his eyes sparkling with a genuine joy because the Philharmonic-Symphony Society had just played a Mozart symphony superlatively well. But when perfection is not attained, then Mr. Toscanini is in a tempest. He is surly, cross, impatient; he becomes the most inaffable of men. It was the fact that his singers did not perform half so well as he desired that tended to intensify his great

unhappiness in Bayreuth.

It may sound like a paradox to say of a man who is idolized by an entire music world and recognized as its greatest conductor that he is a misunderstood genius. And yet such is the case with Mr. Toscanini. He has fame, wealth, adulation—and yet he is among the most misunderstood geniuses of our day. Musicians are inclined to snicker at his capricious temperament, and are inclined to attribute it to a very petty personality. But Toscanini's capricious temperament is nothing more than the result of his need to express himself perfectly, and an impatience with mistakes and imperfections. Everything about him can be explained by this insatiable desire for perfection. His innumerable quarrels with his managers, his volatile moods, his terrible anger, his merciless tyranny over his men—all this comes from something deep within him which demands, relentlessly, incessantly, for perfect music. This, certainly, is not prima-donna temperament; rather it is a guiding force of a sublime artist.

III

One can learn to know the real Toscanini, not in everyday life, but during his rehearsals. His true personality reveals itself then in all its nudity. One learns, for example, that the celebrated temper of Toscanini has been greatly exaggerated. In all the rehearsals I attended I found him to be as docile as a lamb—much more so than any other conductor. He stands quietly in front of his orchestra, a handkerchief twisted around his neck, and with almost superhuman patience and understanding guides his men. I have seen him work upon one short phrase for a half an hour without losing his temper; I have seen him explain minutely and carefully to one of the performers how to attain a certain effect and then, after the performer failed a second time to get it right, begin his explanations all over again. He is almost gentle when mistakes are made and instead of bursting into paroxysms of anger, he speaks a few kind words and then begins from the beginning again. Of course there are times when his Italian temper explodes; but these I have learned much to my surprise are the exceptions rather than the rule.

In rehearsing, he acts, dances, cries, becomes poetical—in an attempt to convey his own feelings of the music to his men. Rehearsing Respighi's *Feste Romane* he wanted to show the clarinetist how to play a certain trill flippantly, so he hunched his back, raised his two hands and shook his fingers rapidly. In indicating to the trombonist how to perform a certain vulgar sound, he kicked his legs out, clenched his fist and emitted a deep groan. He dances, rants and postures in front of his men. In a high-pitched voice he imitates the quality of the sound he wishes. Sometimes he is poetical. In rehearsing the first theme of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, he clasped his hands and swayed them, saying: "It should sound like this—like a mother rocking her baby to sleep." In *Tristan*, during the second act, he suddenly stopped the rehearsal and turning a pathetic face to the singers, cried out: "Haven't you people ever felt what it means to love?"

And always he is modest of his own contribution to the music he is conducting. Several years ago—a rehearsal I shall never forget as long as I live—he was putting the finishing touches upon Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. By means of his penetrating analysis, his own inherent greatness, his fire and genius he had succeeded in

making his orchestra play as it had never done before. The men were bewildered at the sounds they produced, and at the quality of the performance. At the end of the rehearsal, Toscanini smiled a tired smile and told his men that he was satisfied and that the rehearsal was over. The men, overwhelmed by the glimpse at a true genius they had just had, rose as one man and cheered Toscanini for fully ten minutes. Frantically, Toscanini tried to stop their cheering with wild gestures of his hand; he was obviously uncomfortable. When the ovation subsided, Toscanini begged them—with tears in his eyes—not to do him honor. "You see, gentlemen," he said with an honesty which was almost heartbreaking, "it isn't me . . . it's Beethoven!"

(Continued from page 478)

formerly owned by the Brunswick Radio Corporation, have been turned over to the new Brunswick Record Corporation, recently formed by Consolidated Film Industries, Inc. Practically the same sales and laboratory management will remain in charge. Policies practised in the past will be continued, but the new company plans to promote the sales of records on an even larger scale than heretofore.



DAVID EWEN, whose "Mr. Toscanini" appears in this issue, is a frequent contributor of articles on music to the foremost literary and musical magazines in America and England. In 1930 and 1931 he traveled throughout Europe, covering the outstanding musical events for such magazines as the *New Freeman*, *Theatre Guild Magazine*, *Outlook* and *Hound and Horn*. He is the author of "The Unfinished Symphony: The Life of Franz Schubert," published last Spring, and his latest book, "From Bach to Stravinsky: A Critical Anthology," which he edited for W. W. Norton, was issued the first week in November.



MAURICE B. KATZ, whose article, "The Rise of Schönberg," appears in this issue, is a young Philadelphia pianist, who espoused the cause of Schönberg and the modern school as far back as 1909, when he quarreled about Schönberg with his teacher, Mauritz Leefson. Mr. Katz studied harmony and composition under Dr. Henry Lang and is at present devoting himself to teaching, accompanying and concertizing.



Among the articles scheduled for early publication in *Disques* are: "Absolute Music: Does It Exist?" by Isaac Goldberg; "Some Recent Books on Music and Musicians," by Isaac Goldberg; "Medtner," by Henry Gerstlé; "Bruno Walter," by Henry F. Peyser; "Listen, My Children," by Dorothy E. Nichols.

"Die Meistersinger" on Records

By RICHARD J. MAGRUDER

Lest there be some disappointment and possible misunderstanding, it had better be stated at the outset that the above title is somewhat misleading: *Die Meistersinger*, in brief, has not been released in complete form. The records discussed in this article are only excerpts; and excerpts, moreover, that, with several important exceptions, have already been issued, so that the majority of them are probably tolerably familiar.

Next to listening to records, nothing seems to give record collectors so vast a pleasure as criticizing the phonograph companies and pointing out, with righteously indignant fingers, certain omissions—some quite unpardonable, it is true, but others at least understandable—from the various catalogues. This criticism, of course, is an excellent thing and should be encouraged; it tends to keep the companies on their toes and may even serve to prevent them from plunging into some devastating blunders into which they otherwise might readily fall. Errors, as we have had abundant opportunity to observe of late, do occasionally occur in the phonograph industry. Much of this criticism, hurled with such evident relish at the companies, is justified; but a great deal isn't; it isn't always possible to feel altogether sympathetic toward the collector and his manifold woes. Only too often his violent clamoring for a recording of this or that work has its origin more in a rather shabby desire to make an impressive noise and so attract attention than in any sincere desire to possess a recording of the work, or even in a firm conviction that its merits warrant its being recorded and made available for those who could afford it. The reluctance with which collectors subscribed to the Hugo Wolf Society, recently formed by His Master's Voice, demonstrates the truth of this unpleasant assertion.

Collectors, however, are on pretty safe ground when they demand to know why we haven't as yet had a complete *Meistersinger*, or anything like a complete *Meistersinger*. The chances are that it would really sell very briskly if only it were issued. There are bulky albums containing generous portions of *Die Walküre*, of *Siegfried*, of *Die Götterdämmerung*, of *Tristan and Isolde*, of the third act of *Parsifal* and even of *Tannhäuser*. But *Die Meistersinger*, in spite of its great popularity and unimpeachable references from the proper authorities, has yet to appear in album form. This is exceedingly curious. Surely, if the companies can afford to issue complete recordings of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*, his *Fedora*, Massenet's *Werther* and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, not to mention the whole shelf of Verdi and Puccini album sets,—surely, if these works, to which *Die Meistersinger* is immeasurably superior in merit and almost equal in popularity, can be issued, then there is no sound reason why they can't also put out Wagner's great musical comedy. The companies have been known to take far greater risks—and not infrequently, indeed, their daring has been gratifyingly rewarded.

Several years ago, writing in the January, 1930, issue of the *Gramophone*, a correspondent of that magazine said that H.M.V., in the Covent Garden program book for a performance of the *Meistersinger*, announced that "records of the music-

drama (with the inimitable Bockelmann as Sachs) would be issued very shortly." Well, where are they? It is true that since then we have had one or two H.M.V. records with Bockelmann as Sachs; but that isn't very much. Nothing less than a reasonably complete recording of the work will do; and it is to be hoped that when it is finally undertaken there will be only one orchestra and one cast for the whole work, as in the *Tristan* and *Tannhäuser* Bayreuth Festival sets, and not, as in the *Walküre* and *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* albums, three or four orchestras and several groups of singers (the booklet which accompanied the *Walküre* albums explained the use of two orchestras—the Berlin State Opera and the London Symphony—and several groups of singers by saying that it was desired to make the artistic scope of the set as wide as possible! President Hoover, explaining his position on some important issue, could scarcely do better.).

When we finally do get *Die Meistersinger* complete, one thing is certain: it will have to be flawlessly recorded, for at this late date there can be no excuse for incompetent recording. In fact, the longer the companies put it off, the better it will have to be, so that we are justified in looking forward to receiving someday a really first-rate recorded performance of the work.

In the absence of a complete recording of *Die Meistersinger*, however, it is possible to patch together several of the more important scenes. H.M.V., though it hasn't yet given us the whole music drama, has been commendably active in putting at our disposal a quantity of first-rate recordings of salient excerpts, many of which have been repressed and issued over here by Victor. These excerpts, taken by and large, maintain a high level of excellence and are well worth investigating. Moreover, when pieced together they constitute an abridged—and a very much abridged—version of the work, bearing approximately the same relation to the complete music drama as the *Siegfried* album does to the complete *Siegfried*, though the latter album, I believe, gives a somewhat better résumé of the action of the music drama than the *Meistersinger* excerpts do.

Here* it is proposed to call attention to these discs, pointing out their proper place in the music drama and indicating the various cuts, which are, unfortunately, numerous. The score references are to the Eulenburg miniature.

Act I

The Prelude has surely not been neglected by the recording companies. There are four domestic versions alone, as well as various foreign recordings. Victor and Columbia each have two versions in their catalogues. The Victor recordings were made by Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Karl Muck and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra; and the Columbia by Artur Bodanzky and Max von Schillings, each conducting an anonymous orchestra. All these versions are too well known to need much comment here. None of them represents an ideal recording of the work. The finest interpretation is perhaps that of Karl Muck; but the recording in his version, though beautifully clear, lacks sonority

* It will be noted that the group of Electrola records, made at an actual performance at the Berlin State Opera several years ago, are not considered in this article. These discs, while highly interesting as curiosities, reveal too many mechanical flaws for them to be seriously considered by anyone wanting first-rate recordings from the opera.

and depth. At all events, any of these versions, played on a good electrical machine, will give fairly satisfying results. I have not had an opportunity to hear the two new recordings recently issued in Europe. They are by Bruno Walter and the Berlin Philharmonic (Columbia) and Clemens Schmalstich and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra (H.M.V.); both have been highly praised, especially the Walter, and both have the very considerable advantage of using only two record sides, like the Chicago Symphony version. The breaks in the three-side sets are rather irritating.

The first ten pages of the opening scene, the Church Scene—pp. 65 to 75—, giving the stately chorale to St. John (Ernest Newman calls it “perhaps the only first-rate German chorale written since the seventeenth century”), have been recorded by the Berlin State Opera forces under Leo Blech (V-9160). Though several years old, the recording reveals no disturbing signs of age and in fact could readily be passed off as a late product. The singing and orchestral playing are excellent, and the orchestral phrases, based on Walther’s love theme, that are played during the pauses between the lines of the chorale are beautifully rendered. This is a fine record, and reference will be made to the reverse side, which sets forth material in Act III, later on.

Between the chorale and Pogner’s Address, beginning on page 212, nothing has been recorded, so that it will be necessary to skip all of 137 pages. Pogner’s Address has just been issued by H.M.V., sung by Alexander Kipnis and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Orthmann (V-DB1543). It is done with just the right spirit, and recording and orchestral accompaniment are superb. The same selection has also been recorded by Ivar Andresen with an anonymous orchestra on Columbia 50223D. It is less felicitous than the Kipnis version, and Andresen’s Pogner is not so genial and warmly human as Kipnis’. This music continues to page 229; a cut of 54 pages follows. Walther’s *Am stillen Herd*, on page 283, is the next excerpt the records offer. There are various domestic versions, but all of them omit the parts of Sachs, Beckmesser, Kothner and Vogelgesang and all end on page 304. Alfred Piccaver, accompanied by an orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer, sings it on Brunswick 90171; Carl Martin Oehman, accompanied by an anonymous orchestra, does it for Odeon (O-5130); and Max Lorenz, the new Metropolitan tenor, renders it on Victor 11162. He is assisted by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Schmalstich. Here the collector will be compelled to duplicate. He will doubtless want the Piccaver version, not only because it is the best sung, but also because on the reverse side it contains the finest version of the Prize Song from Act III, which will be discussed later. But he will also want the Lorenz disc because on the reverse it sets forth the Trial Song, beginning on page 322. The Trial Song takes us to page 345, and that is all we have from Act I. In other words, out of the 432 pages of Act I, we have recorded about 136, and 65 of them, it should be noted, comprise the Prelude. If the recording directors really are puzzled about the question of discovering fresh material to record, they need seek no further than Act I of *Die Meistersinger*. There they will find a gold mine. There is plenty of music in Act I that would lend itself to recording purposes admirably, and it is therefore to be hoped that, instead of duplicating passages already recorded, some effort will be devoted to recording this fine music.

Act II

The first 57 pages of Act II have not been recorded. The first recorded selection from this Act begins on page 490 with Sachs' *Was duftet doch der Flieder*. This has been recorded by Friedrich Schorr for Victor—twice, in fact, and both times electrically. In the earlier version he is accompanied by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Blech, and on the new record by Coates and the London Symphony. The orchestral accompaniment and recording are somewhat superior in the later version, but if you already own the first recording, it is not recommended that you scrap it and buy the new one—unless, of course, your pocketbook is built on more generous lines than is customary nowadays. Both versions end on page 497, and the reverse side of each begins where the other side left off. Starting with Sachs' *Kein' Regel wollte da passen*, the music continues to the end of the scene, on page 505. The new version ends with Sachs' *Hans Sachsen!*, while the old one includes a concluding orchestral grunt. But it is not a vitally important matter.

The ensuing duet between Sachs and Eva has been recorded by Schorr and Gota Ljungberg, with the London Symphony Orchestra, on V-D2001. The conductor is Lawrance Collingwood, who figured in one or two of the discs in the *Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung* albums. The duet, beginning on page 506, proceeds, with a few minor cuts, to page 551. The record is beautifully done; Ljungberg and Schorr, as Eva and Sachs, are both at their best, and the London Symphony provides a first-rate orchestral background. It is a fine record, and the duet contains some of the most charming music in the music drama. Sixty-four pages must now be skipped, the records beginning again on page 615 with Sachs' vigorous Cobbling Song, *Jerum! Jerum!* This is sung by Schorr on Victor 7426, accompanied by the London Symphony under Coates. Though Schorr sings it with the requisite gusto and heartiness, and though the recording and accompaniment are beyond cavil, it is recommended that the record be passed up and the new version by Rudolf Bockelmann, accompanied by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Schmalstich, be taken in its place. It is done with a little more spirit than Schorr's, but most important of all it is backed by another selection from *Die Meistersinger*, while the Schorr has the *Blich' ich umber* from *Tannhäuser* on the reverse. Both records carry us to page 650, but there are numerous cuts, and the parts of the other characters are unfortunately missing. That is all we have from Act II. Of the 358 pages that comprise Act II, then, only about 70* have been recorded.

Act III

The profoundly beautiful Prelude to Act III is available domestically in two versions—both, incidentally, appearing under the Columbia label. They are by Max von Schillings, conducting an anonymous orchestra, and Gabriel Pierné, conducting the Colonne Orchestra. The former's occupies the odd side of his two-

* There are two early Parlophone records (Nos. PA-PE10541 and PA-PE10542), which I have not heard, that set forth various quartets, duets and solos from Act II, as well as Beckmesser's Serenade. The singers include Emmy Bettendorf, Michael Bohnen, Carl Martin Oehmann and Leo Schützendorf. As to the recording and performance, of course, I cannot speak.

record set of the Prelude to the music drama; the latter's occupies a side and a half of the two recent Columbia discs giving, in addition to the Prelude to Act III, the Dance of the Apprentices and the March of the Corporations. Therefore, if you select Schillings' version of the Prelude to Act I, you will automatically get the Prelude to Act III. But the chances are you will want Pierné's two discs—that is, if you want a representative group of records from *Die Meistersinger* and are growing impatient waiting for the complete recording—for they present the Dance of the Apprentices and the March of the Corporations later on in the Act. For that reason, Pierné's version is given preference here.

After the Prelude to Act III, ending on page 8, it is necessary to skip to page 42, where we have the beginning of the Wahn Monologue. This is sung by Friedrich Schorr, accompanied by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Blech, on V-7319. This music, in which the old cobbler broods upon the illusions and follies of mankind, is convincingly sung by Schorr, and the disc is an excellent one. The record carries us to the end of the scene. Two Victor records (V-7427 and V-7428), which were released last Fall in the special list of foreign repressings, begin where the Monologue concluded, that is, on page 67. These are sung by Schorr and Rudolf Laubenthal with the London Symphony under Coates. Only the first of these discs need interest us here, for reasons that will shortly become apparent. The first disc, beginning with *Grüss Gott, mein Junker*, carries us, without a break, to page 108. There is then a cut of some 14 pages, and the second disc begins with Walther's *Abendlich glühend*, which is the future Prize Song,—all of it, that is, but the conclusion. This second disc, as was said above, need not detain us. In the first place, a new recording of the selection, done by Melchior, Schorr and the London Symphony under Heger, is incomparably superior, and in the second place, the new recording is backed by Sachs' acknowledgment of the crowd's greeting, which occurs later on in the Act. The Laubenthal-Schorr disc is backed by *Aha! Da Streicht die Lene schon um's Haus*, which is included on the disc containing the Quintet. It is the same recording, in fact. Therefore, it is recommended that you obtain V-7427, omit V-7428, and get in its place the new Melchior-Schorr record, V-D2000.

Skipping to page 243, we have the so-called "Footstool Duet," sung superbly by Schorr and Elisabeth Rethberg on V-8195. The first side of the disc carries us to page 268. There is then a cut to page 286, and the next side continues to page 317. In every way, the record is superbly done. Immediately following the "Footstool Duet" is the previously mentioned *Aha! Da streicht die Lene schon um's Haus*. This is the music Sachs sings as he confers mastership upon David. The music continues to page 334, where the lovely Quintet begins. This is given on the reverse side of the disc, V-D2002. The record, a new one, is magnificently done. The voices blend beautifully, and the recording is all that could be desired. The Odeon disc of this selection is an early recording, but though it conceals its age remarkably well, it does not equal the new version. The Quintet ends on page 350.

The first music of the final scene of Act III that has been recorded is the familiar Dance of the Apprentices, beginning on page 402. The new recording of this selection made by Gabriel Pierné and the Colonne Orchestra is to be preferred

to other versions, not only for its superior recording but also because on the reverse side it contains the March of the Corporations, which occurs shortly after the Dance.

The various trade guilds, tailors, shoemakers, bakers and youthful apprentices now being grouped on the open meadow on the banks of the River Pegnitz, the assembled crowd, at the sight of Sachs, rises and breaks into the beautiful chorale, *Wach' auf! es nahet gen den Tag*, the words of which were taken from a poem by the historical Hans Sachs. This stirring music (pp. 441 to 452) has been recorded on the reverse side of the disc containing the Church Scene music, mentioned earlier in this article. Profoundly moved, Sachs thanks them, and then outlines the rules of the contest. This has been recorded by Schorr on V-D2000 (the reverse side contains the *Abendlich glühend*, sung by Melchior and Schorr, mentioned above). This music, beginning on page 452, takes us to page 467. We then have nothing more recorded until the Prize Song on page 537. All the available versions are cut, but Piccaver's recording, backed by *Am stillen Herd*, stands out as the best. It is well-recorded, and Prüwer's orchestral accompaniment is satisfactorily played.

After the Prize Song, the collector must skip to page 586, where Sachs' *Verachtet mir die Meister nicht* begins. This has been recorded (on the two sides of V-9285) by Schorr and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra and Chorus under Blech. The music continues uncut to the end of the work. The reverse side of the Bockelmann Cobbling Song record gives us the music down to page 602, but as the last 18 pages of the work are omitted, preference must be given to the Schorr record, which is adequately rendered and recorded.

Of the last Act, then, only about 290 pages of the 620 have been recorded. Of the 1411 pages of the entire music drama, about 496 can be heard on the phonograph. The most irritating feature about these *Meistersinger* selections, apart from their inevitable incompleteness, is the great amount of duplication and overlapping. Anyone who wants as much of the *Meistersinger* as he can possibly get on records will be compelled to buy two versions of certain selections, and the thrifty collector, of course, will not be much attracted by this. H.M.V. seems to be spending most of its time re-recording selections it has recorded before instead of giving us new material. It would be better, before duplicating recorded selections from the music drama, to wait until the whole thing had been recorded. That is the proper time for duplication. But those who are tired of waiting for the complete work and do not mind the inescapable duplicating of certain numbers will find it well worth while to go over these records. They will not hear all of *Die Meistersinger*, to be sure, but they will hear enough of it to give them a very good idea of the work, and if they are thoroughly familiar with its enchanting music—as we all surely ought to be—these discs, many of which are magnificently done, will be certain to stir up pleasant memories of previously heard actual performances.

DIE MEISTERSINGER RECORDS

[It is suggested that those wanting a representative group of records from *Die Meistersinger* obtain the discs marked with an asterisk. The selection of the Prelude, however, had better be left to the individual to decide for himself.]

PRELUDE. Three sides and GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG: *Siegfried's Rhine Journey*. One side. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Karl Muck. Two 12-inch discs (V-6858 and V-6859). Included in Victor Set M-37. \$2 each.

PRELUDE. Two sides. Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock. One 12-inch disc (V-6651). \$2.

PRELUDE. Three sides and LOHENGRIN: *Prelude to Act 3*. One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Artur Bodanzky. Two 12-inch discs (C-67467D and C-67468D). \$1.50 each.

PRELUDE. Three sides and PRELUDE TO ACT 3. One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Max von Schillings. Two 12-inch discs (C-G50275D and C-G50276D). \$1.25 each.

ACT I—*Kirchenchor*. One side and ACT 3—*Wach' auf es nahet gen den Tag*. One side. Berlin State Opera Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Leo Blech. One 12-inch disc (V-9160). \$1.50.*

ACT I—*Ansprache des Pogner*. One side and DER ROSENKAVALIER: *Letter Scene and Waltz*. (R. Strauss) One side. Alexander Kipnis (Bass) with Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Erich Orthmann. One 12-inch disc (V-DB1543). \$2.50.*

ACT I—*Ansprache des Pogner*. One side and DIE GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG: *Hier sitz' ich zur Wacht*. One side. Ivar Andresen (Bass) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc (C-50223D). \$1.25.

ACT I—*Am stillen Herd*. One side and ACT I—*Fanget an!* One side. Max Lorenz (Tenor) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich. One 12-inch disc (V-11162). \$1.50.*

ACT I—*Am stillen Herd*. One side and ACT 3—*Preislied*. One side. Alfred Piccaver (Tenor) and orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer. One 12-inch disc (B-90171). \$1.50.*

ACT I—*Am stillen Herd*. One side and ACT 3—*Preislied*. One side. Carl Martin Oehman (Tenor) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc (O-5130). \$1.50.

ACT II—*Was duftet doch der fieder*. One side and ACT II—*Kein' regel wollte da passen*. One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7425). \$2.*

ACT II—*Gu'n Abend, Meister!* One side and ACT II—*Ich seh', 's war nur*. One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone), Gota Ljungberg (Soprano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lawrance Collingwood. One 12-inch disc (V-D2001). \$2.*

ACT II—*Jerum! Jerum! (Schusterlied)*. One side and ACT 3—*Verachtet mir die Meister nicht*. One side. Rudolf Bockelmann (Bass-Baritone) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich. One 12-inch disc (V-C2255). \$1.75.*

ACT II—*Jerum! Jerum! (Schusterlied)*. One side and TANNHÄUSER: *Blich'ich umber*. One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7426). \$2.

ACT III—PRELUDE. One side and PRELUDE TO ACT I. Last side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Max von Schillings. One 12-inch disc (C-G50276D). \$1.25 (*See above*).

ACT III—PRELUDE. One side and ACT III—*Entrance of the Apprentices*. One side. Colonne Orchestra conducted by Gabriel Pierné. One 12-inch disc (C-G67994D). \$1.50.*

ACT III—*Wahn! Wahn! Überall Wahn!* One side and ACT III—*Ein kobold half wohl da!* One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Leo Blech. One 12-inch disc (V-7319). \$2.*

ACT III—*Grüss' Gott, mein Junker*. One side and ACT III—*Mein Freund, in holder Jugendzeit*. One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and Rudolph Laubenthal (Tenor) with London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7427). \$2.*

ACT III—*Abendlich glühend*. One side and ACT III—*Aha! Da streicht die Lene schon um's Haus*. One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and Rudolph Laubenthal (Tenor) with London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7428). \$2.

ACT III—*Sieh! Eschen! Dacht'ich doch.* One side and ACT III—*Hat man mit dem Schuhwerk.* One side. Elisabeth Rethberg (Soprano) and Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc (V-8195). \$2.50.*

ACT III—*Aha! Da streicht die Lene schon um's Haus.* One side and ACT III—*Quintet—Selig, wie die Sonne meines Glückes.* One side. Schumann (Soprano), Melchior (Tenor), Schorr (Baritone), Parr (Soprano), Williams (Tenor) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. One 12-inch disc (V-D2002). \$2.*

ACT III—*Quintet—Selig, wie die Sonne meines Glückes.* One side and LOHENGRIIN: *Hörtest du nicht, vernahmst du kein Kommen.* One side. E. Bettendorf (Soprano), M. Bohnen (Baritone), C. M. Oehmann (Tenor), W. Gombert (Tenor), M. Lüders (Soprano) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc (C-G55250F). \$1.50.

ACT III—*Dance of the Apprentices.* One side and ACT III—*March of the Corporations.* One side. Colonne Orchestra conducted by Gabriel Pierné. One 12-inch disc (C-G67995D). \$1.50.*

ACT III—*Wach' auf! Es naht gen den Tag.* One side ACT I—*Kirchenchor.* One side. Berlin State Opera Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Leo Blech. One 12-inch disc (V-9160). \$1.50. (See above.)*

ACT III—*Euch macht ihr's leicht.* Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lawrance Collingwood. One side and ACT III—*Abendlich glühend.* Lauritz Melchior (Tenor) and Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) with London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Heger. One 12-inch disc (V-D2000). \$2.*

ACT III—PREISLIED. One side and ACT I—*Am stillen Herd.* One side. Alfred Piccaver (Tenor) and orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer. One 12-inch disc (B-90171). \$1.50. (See above.)*

ACT III—*Verachtet mir die Meister nicht.* One side and ACT III—*Was Deutsch und echt.* One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Leo Blech. One 12-inch disc (V-9285). \$1.50.*





ORCHESTRA

BEETHOVEN

V-7439

to

V-7445

SYMPHONY NO. 3 in *E Flat Major* ("*Eroica*"), Op. 55.

Fourteen sides. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.

Seven 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-115. \$14.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 9.

BACH

C-LX134

to

C-LX136

IMPORTED

SUITE NO. 2 in *B Minor*. Six sides. Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.

Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 821.

Mengelberg here had a wonderful chance to increase and make firmly secure his already considerable phonographic reputation. He had a priceless opportunity to throw his New York detractors into confusion and make his American admirers regret his absence even more keenly than they at present do. Given two indubitable masterworks to record; given, further, two magnificent orchestras to record them with; and given, finally, flawless recording—with all these things in his favor, a conductor of Mengelberg's standing and ability should have turned out two really incomparable recordings. Considering the circumstances, indeed, incomparable recordings would almost have seemed inevitable. Yet Mengelberg performs the miracle and gives us, instead of the sensitive, revealing readings naturally to be expected from him, interpretations that are, at worst, commonplace, stodgy and undistinguished, and, at best, unobjectionable. The reading in each set is notably lacking in fire, in poetry, in charm and in spirit. Mengelberg, who displayed such superb vigor and fire and eloquence in his Tschaikowsky recordings, becomes disconcertingly cautious, plodding and overly-careful (at least he does on these records) when he essays Beethoven. And turning to Bach, the results are likewise disappointing. He reveals a similar tendency toward dullness, playing the rollicking *B Minor Suite* in a cut-and-dried, prosaic and altogether lifeless manner.

Much was expected from the *Eroica* album. Rumors that Mengelberg had made the set with the Philharmonic-Symphony before leaving these shores have been circulating for some months, and it was generally felt that here at last would be a recording entirely worthy of that stupendous Symphony. It is doubly unfortunate, then, that Mengelberg's set falls short of these—perhaps extravagant and unjustified—expectations, because this is probably the last *Eroica* we'll get for some time. Columbia and Brunswick both have late electrical recordings in their catalogues, and it would therefore be unreasonable to expect anything further from them for a while. And now that Victor has gone to the formidable expense of having Mengelberg and the Philharmonic-Symphony record the work, it is hardly likely that the company will give us still another version very soon—unless, by some happy miracle, it should be decided to persuade Toscanini and the Phil-

harmonic-Symphony to make a long-playing record of the work. Such a move would be gratifying to the collector, and it would also make an excellent boost for the still struggling program transcriptions.



In the Fall of 1929, when Mengelberg took over the conductorship of the Philharmonic-Symphony after Toscanini had had charge of the orchestra for the opening weeks of the season, it was said that the Dutch conductor found the band in an exhausted condition, and, in fact, his complaints to that effect figured largely in his subsequent departure. The *Eroica*, according to rumor, was recorded during that period. How true this is we do not know, but certainly these records of the Symphony No. 3 make it all seem very plausible. The first movement—and that, the majority of music lovers will agree, is the most important of the work—seems labored and worked over with excessive care. It is almost entirely drained of the life and passion that Beethoven put into it. It lacks the fine roar and effortless push that make it so thrilling when sympathetically played. The Funeral March is perhaps the best played of the four. It is beautifully done, and Mengelberg, eschewing undue sentimentality, gives it the proper dignity and eloquence. It is as if all concerned had suddenly taken a lively interest in an otherwise boring job. But the Scherzo goes dully; and the Finale, which Theodore Thomas said “starts like a whirlwind,” surely bears no recognizable resemblance to anything so upheaving and cataclysmic.

Having said so much, however, it is high time to examine the virtues of the set—and fortunately there are some impressive ones. Those who feel, with this reviewer, that after all the music is more important than the interpreter will not be altogether disappointed. There are qualities in the set that cannot summarily be dismissed. The recording, for example, is of the highest importance. Throughout it is beautifully done in every respect. The balance is just, the tone is excellent, and the clarity with which the various instruments are recorded is notable. The trumpets, so often lost in recordings of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven symphonies, are easily distinguished and come out with a fine ring. This reviewer, in spite of Mengelberg's far from inspiring interpretation, confesses to deriving immense pleasure from the set. It depends, of course, upon whether you place the recording or the interpretation first. The ideal, naturally, is flawless recording and a first-rate interpretation. When unable to get that heady combination, this reviewer is far happier with a tolerably good performance superlatively recorded than he is with a superlative performance poorly recorded. It is all a matter of opinion, and nothing is to be gained from laboring the point.

The unfailingly delightful Suite of Bach's has been recorded electrically only once before. Frederick Stock and his Chicago Symphony Orchestra recorded it for Victor several years ago, and the records are still among the most satisfactory we have had from the Chicago band. Considering the charm and buoyancy of this music, it is more than passing strange that it hasn't long before this caught the eyes—or ears—of the various recording directors. In these days of excessive duplications, two recordings of a work, especially of a masterwork, are not very many. Scored only for flutes and strings—which record perhaps as well as any instruments—the music of the Suite lends itself to recording purposes extraordinarily well. With its engaging tunes, its vivacious, dance-like rhythms, its variety



and color—astonishing, considering the limited combination of instruments Bach employs—and its marvelous simplicity, the Suite is a work that should appeal to anyone with reasonably cultivated ears. Hence the mystery of its not being recorded more frequently.

Historical and analytical notes are included in a leaflet that accompanies the records, and so it is not necessary to repeat that information here. Bolder and more forward than that in the Chicago set, the recording is full-volumed and rich; and the Concertgebouw seems to have more weight than the Chicago. The flute or flutes—an Amsterdam correspondent of the *Gramophone*, who attends the Concertgebouw concerts regularly, writes in the October issue that Mengelberg, when playing this Suite, uses no less than seven flutes—is powerfully recorded, but so, too, are the strings, so that the balance does not suffer. And there is none of the forced, strained effect that usually accompanies excessive amplification. Reproduced on a good electrical machine, these records are certainly impressive examples of modern recording. Mengelberg's interpretation, however, is too solemn and decorous. It lacks the unaffected joyousness and warmth that make Stock's set so attractive. More gusto and spirit would have helped a lot. A lighter touch and a livelier reading, and the set would have been an outstandingly fine one. As it is, it is an admirable recording of the Suite, but scarcely an exemplary performance.

WAGNER

C-68011D
and
C-68012D

SIEGFRIED IDYL. Four sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 68.

Bruno Walter will be here shortly to conduct the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, and so Columbia makes appropriate preparation for the event by releasing this admirable set of records. After the two fine versions of the *Siegfried Idyl* that Victor (Karl Muck) and Brunswick (Otto Klemperer) issued last April (they were reviewed on page 71 of the April issue of *Disques*), it would seem almost futile for another company to release the work. Hearing Muck's superlative recording, it seemed extremely unlikely that it would be surpassed or even equalled on records for a long time to come. And the Klemperer set was nearly as good as Muck's. But Walter's new version—he made an early electrical recording for Columbia—bears comparison with either of the previous sets. It isn't often that a musical composition is represented in all three domestic catalogues with superb recordings; generally one version stands out as clearly superior to its rivals. But the *Siegfried Idyl* seems to have received about the best the three companies could give it. Walter's felicitous reading is beautifully polished and finished in every detail, and under his revealing hand the music seems to acquire a richer warmth and glow. The anonymous orchestra achieves a fine, well-rounded tone, and the delicacy and beauty of the playing have been fittingly recorded, so that the records, mechanically and artistically, are well-nigh flawless. This is not to say that, even if you already own either the Muck or Klemperer sets, it would still be advisable to obtain this recording also. But if the *Siegfried Idyl* is still absent from your shelves and you contemplate acquiring it, this set deserves thorough consideration.

DEBUSSY
C-68010D

PRÉLUDE À L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE. Two sides.
Straram Orchestra conducted by Walther Straram.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.



DEBUSSY
THOMAS
V-7453
to
V-7456

SELECTED WORKS: (1) *Nuages*. Two sides. (2) *La Cathédrale Engloutie*. (Orchestrated by Stokowski) Two sides. (3) *Dances Sacrée et Profane*. (Debussy) Three sides and
MIGNON: *Gavotte*. (Thomas) One side. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.
Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-116. \$8.

Seven electrical recordings of Debussy's orchestral *Prelude to an Afternoon of a Faun* (after Mallarmé's poem) are now internationally available. If there are others I am not familiar with them. Seven eminent directors conduct: Stokowski, Klenau, Wolff, Pierné, Coppola, Ronald and Straram. The first, second and last named conductors' versions may be had from domestic catalogues. The present Columbia release of Walther Straram's rendering is by far the finest of the lot, in respect to both recording and interpretation.

The Straram recording first appeared under the French Columbia label in the Spring of 1930. This year it was awarded first prize in the orchestral division of a phonograph record competition held by the versatile Parisian literary, scientific, theatrical and musical weekly, *Candide*. (Dominique Sordet is the well-informed phonograph editor of this publication.)

The Stokowski and Klenau versions fall down by reason of inferior reproduction. Albert Wolff's record (Polydor) comes closest to the brilliance achieved by Straram and the French Columbia engineers. Yet the Polydor surface noise is obtrusive, the general orchestral sonority inferior. For balance, instrumental virtuosity, general rotundity, expressiveness of interpretation and approach to an actual concert performance, Walther Straram's conception of the music and his orchestra's execution of it set standards which will remain unapproached for a long while to come. A definitive phonographic version.

The Stokowski album does not lend itself entirely to ecstatic reviewing. *Nuages*, No. 1 of *Trois Nocturnes*, has been done better by Wolff (Brunswick) and by Pierné (Odeon)—at least as regards delineation strictly complying with Debussy's score. The Philadelphians give, in spots, a finer toned and more virtuosic sonority. I would like to hear the strings (*pizzicato*) in stronger relief as they appear in the syncopated figure heard one inch from the end of side one. Wolff achieves a better balance here and his woodwinds are not thrown to the foreground so forcibly. This does not sound like a recent recording.

Stokowski's orchestration should make the composer of the Piano Preludes turn over in his grave (I wonder that Bach does not tire rolling). If ever a piece composed for the keyboard instrument may be said to be *pianistic*, in the highest sense of the term, this Prelude is exactly that. It lends itself to orchestration as readily as does *L'Après-midi d'un faune* cry for violin solo transcription (and Heifetz has seen to this!). Debussy furnishes the original musical idea, the basic



structure; Stokowski distorts it almost beyond recognition with repeated measures, extended pedal points and, among other unnecessary aberrations, by the insertion in the instrumentation of brazen bells—as if Debussy shouts his poetry. The transcription is a great favorite with Philadelphia Orchestra audiences and will be a best-seller on a disc, I predict, but I doubt if the many who will like it have ever heard the original as played by either George Copeland or Walter Gieseking, for instance.

On the other hand, the *Deux danses pour harpe chromatique* (*Danse sacrée; Danse profane*) are published with delightful artistry. The playing and recording are far superior to the *La Voix de son Maître* single disc version of the same work. The string tone is something to marvel at. Edna Phillips' rendition of the harp solo part is expressive and perfectly achieved as to technique. Why has this young artist's name been withheld from the label? Surely the importance of the part warrants her being given proper credit. The pianists in the Philadelphia Orchestra's Saint-Saëns *Carnival of the Animals* recording received label attention for slighter work.

To conclude caustically: What Debussy lover cares about the trite Gavotte from *Mignon*? The persons responsible for this coupling show not only a lack of taste but, more important from the viewpoint of sales, little concern for the desires of the purchaser.

RICHARD GILBERT

**THOMAS
OFFENBACH**

V-L872

IMPORTED

LE CÂID: *Overture*. (Thomas) One side and
LA GRANDE DUCHESSE DE GEROLSTEIN: *Overture*.
(Offenbach) One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by
J. E. Szyfer. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

There's nothing of much consequence here. Both of these overtures probably at one time sounded very sparkling and gay, but time hasn't been very kind to them, and now they appear to be pretty feeble and tawdry stuff. The Thomas is the better. It is less trite and commonplace. Szyfer, leading a small orchestra, conducts with spirit, and the recording is clear.

LISZT
V-D1931

IMPORTED

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY NO. 1 *in F.* (Liszt-Doppler)
Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert
Coates. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

C-50310D

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY NO. 12. (Liszt-Doppler) Two
sides. Hallé Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Liszt Hungarian Rhapsodies are not so exciting as once they were, and they do not offer recording material that is especially striking or novel. But there is always room for discs recorded and played as well as these are. No. 1 is played much as we would expect Coates to play it, and the disc makes highly agreeable listening. The Hallé Orchestra's recording of No. 12 was reviewed on page 308 of the September issue. It, too, is a lively recording. Repressed in Columbia's \$1.25 series, it should attract a large following.

SCHMITT
B-90212

VIENNESE RHAPSODY. Two sides. Lamoureux Orchestra
conducted by Albert Wolff. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.



**RIMSKY-
KORSAKOW
CHABRIER**

B-90210
and
B-90211

CAPRICCIO ESPAGNOL, Op. 34. (Rimsky-Korsakow) Three
sides and

SCHERZO VALSE. (Chabrier) One side. Lamoureux Orches-
tra conducted by Albert Wolff. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 842.

The *Viennese Rhapsody* is the third of *Trois Rhapsodies*, Op. 53, for two pianos, but in its orchestral version, according to Edward Burlingame Hill in his "Modern French Music," it is better known. Mr. Hill finds that it "transports the Viennese waltz into somewhat sophisticated surroundings with fancy and brilliance." This reviewer can find little in the music; it seems like a rather laborious and heavy attempt to evoke the spirit of the Viennese waltz, and what results is an elaborately scored, clumsy and meaningless piece of music, bearing no plausible relation to Vienna or what Vienna is supposed to represent. Maurice Ravel, working along the same lines as Schmitt, achieved far more effective and felicitous results with his *La Valse*. After all, there have been plenty of Viennese composers more competent to do this sort of thing than a foreigner. A Strauss waltz played by some such orchestra as Marek Weber's or Dajos Bela's contains more of the flavor of the Austrian city than a dozen such things as this. It is vigorously played by the Lamoureux Orchestra, and the recording is loud.

The Rimsky-Korsakow piece bears about the same relation to Spain as the Schmitt does to Vienna, but for all that it is far more entertaining, even if frequent performances have rendered it somewhat trite. Albert Coates and the London Symphony provided us with a new electrical recording of the piece a few months back, and it offered as satisfactory a version of the work as one could wish. This one by Wolff is notable for the fine recording; the reproduction of the drums is excellent, and the vivid coloring of the piece is brought out remarkably well. The interpretation is brisk. For anyone just beginning to acquire a taste for symphonic music, this is an admirable set of records, showing off modern recording and orchestral playing to excellent advantage . . . The Chabrier piece, on the odd side, is attractive, and recording and interpretation are first-rate.

GRIEG
O-6819
IMPORTED

NORWEGISCHER BRAUTZUG IM VORÜBERZIEHEN,
Op. 19, No. 2. One side and
HOCHZEITSTAG AUF TROLDHAUGEN, Op. 65, No. 6.
One side. Symphony Orchestra and Karol Szeleter (Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

This disc is only mildly entertaining. A studio recording apparently, the reproduction is rather coarse. Both tunes are familiar, but they are only indifferently played here, and the combination of the orchestra and piano is no improvement.

**MENDELSSOHN**

C-68007D

to

C-68009D

SYMPHONY NO. 4 in *A Major (Italian)*, Op. 90. Six sides.
Hallé Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty.
Three 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 167. \$4.50.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 420.

Several months ago it was Richard Strauss' *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* Suite . . . More recently it was Ravel's *La Valse* . . . And now it is Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony that is being duplicated and re-duplicated by the companies. It would almost seem that there was some definite plan and organized effort on the part of the manufacturers for them all to issue the same work about the same time. Sometimes this is rather irritating, but when the results are as felicitous as they have been with the *Italian* Symphony, it is absurd to cavil. Several months ago, Decca started the ball rolling—somewhat feebly—with a miserable recording and performance of the work. Then, last month, a much superior version of the Symphony appeared under the label of Italian H. M. V. And now the local Columbia Company, again stealing a march on its foreign affiliations, issues a brand new recording of the Symphony played by the fine Hallé Orchestra. This is the first time this version has been released.

Harty's set is easily the best. The Scala version, issued last month, was a good one, competently played and splendidly recorded. But Panizza's interpretation, compared to Harty's, is dull. Harty's brisk tempi and general speeding-up of the whole work not only add considerably to the charm of the work; they also permit him to get the Symphony on three 12-inch records, whereas the other two versions required four. This is an obvious improvement. Under Harty's hands, the Symphony becomes extremely graceful, dainty and melodious, and the admirably responsive Hallé Orchestra gives a thoroughly delightful performance. Even Toscanini would have to strain himself to give a more appealing interpretation of the work than this one. The recording could scarcely be bettered. The set constitutes the handsomest tribute the phonograph has yet paid to Mendelssohn.

DELIUS

V-B3721

IMPORTED

ELEGIE. One side and
CAPRICE. One side. Beatrice Harrison ('Cello) and orchestra
conducted by Eric Fenby. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

It is largely through Eric Fenby's assistance that Delius has been enabled to continue his composing. Fenby, a young Yorkshiresman, has arranged both of these pieces, neither of which belongs among Delius' major works, and conducts them for this recording. Both are richly orchestrated and melodious, and Beatrice Harrison's sensitive playing is properly attuned to the music. The orchestra provides a glowing background; the recording is first-rate.

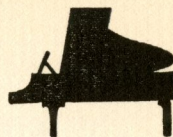
WEINBERGER

C-G50312D

SCHWANDA: *Selection*. Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

A good recording of this delightful music. It was reviewed in the October, 1930, issue.

PIANO



WAGNER
V-1549

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN: *Spinning Song*. (Wagner-Liszt) Two sides. Ignace Jan Paderewski (Piano). One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Another recording of this piece, played by Brailowsky, was issued by Brunswick a month or two ago. This one is the superior. The recording is better, and Paderewski plays delightfully. It is a very enjoyable little disc.

STRAWINSKY
NAT
C-D13114
IMPORTED

DANSE RUSSE from "*Petrouchka*." (Strawinsky) One side and
POUR UN PETIT MOUJIK. (Yves Nat) One side. Yves Nat (Piano). One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Yves Nat, according to the *Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians*, is a French pianist, born in Beziers in 1890. He "has composed pianoforte preludes, and a sonatina in which he revolutionises pianoforte technique, and gives it an added grandeur and force." Here he plays the Russian Dance from *Petrouchka* and his own composition, *Pour un Petit Moujik*, a pleasant enough little piece. His playing is competent, and the recording is satisfactory.

CHAMBER MUSIC



HAYDN

C-GQX10135
and
C-GQX10136
IMPORTED

QUARTET in D Minor (*Quinten*), Op. 76, No. 2. Four sides. Poltronieri Quartet. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 10.

The labelling is incorrect. According to the record seals, the work the Poltronieri Quartet plays here is a "Quartetto," Op. 72, of Haydn's. No available list of Haydn's eighty-three string quartets lists an Op. 72, and as it happens, this one is No. 2 of the Op. 76 group. Italian Columbia should correct the error, for it is not only on the record labels, but it also appears in several of the company's supplements.

March 31, 1932, will mark the two-hundredth anniversary of Haydn's birth. It is not recommended that the companies celebrate the occasion as they did the Beethoven and Schubert centennials, but it would be a good idea to release a few of his symphonies and quartets at that time. There are plenty of them yet to be



recorded, and Haydn's works lend themselves to the phonograph extremely well. The present quartet was recorded several years ago by the Elman String Quartet. It is a simple and lovely little work, but the Poltronieri players don't get much out of it. Their performance is dull and uninspired. Haydn apparently doesn't warm them as he should. The recording is excellent.



OPERA

PUCCINI

C-GQX10119

to

C-GQX10131

IMPORTED

MANON LESCAUT: *Opera in Four Acts*. Thirteen sides. Italian Operatic Artists, La Scala Chorus and Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. Thirteen 12-inch discs in album. \$26.

GIORDANO

C-CQX10496

to

C-CQX10506

IMPORTED

FEDORA: *Opera in Three Acts*. Italian Operatic Artists, La Scala Chorus and Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. Twenty-one sides and
SIBERIA: *Cena di Pasqua*. One side. Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. Eleven 12-inch discs in album. \$22.

The recording companies have treated few composers with more generosity than they have the Italian operatic composers. Not only have the more popular works of these men been recorded in complete form—as well as an incalculable number of excerpts,—but every now and then one of the less familiar ones appears in a complete, or a virtually complete, recording. Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*, for example, was issued only a few months ago, and now the same composer's *Fedora*, done by the same forces (Italian Columbia), arrives. Some types of music have been grossly neglected by the companies, but surely the well-heeled Italian opera fan, able to spend \$20 or \$30 for a set of records without flinching, has no adequate cause for complaint. Few music lovers, in fact, have been more lavishly served than he,—unless, perhaps, it be the popular music fans, and whether or not they are entitled to come under the chaste heading of music lovers is a matter that had better be debated elsewhere.

Manon Lescaut is probably the earliest of Puccini's operas to retain a permanent place in the repertoire, and so it is not unfamiliar to those who live in vicinities where there is a competent operatic company. Based on Abbé Prevost's novel, the libretto was prepared by the composer with the assistance of a group of friends. The first performance was at Turin in 1893, and it achieved a remarkable success; it was Puccini's first genuine triumph. In 1907 the opera was produced at the Metropolitan with Caruso, Cavalieri and Scotti; the composer himself, then on his first visit to America, conducted. The opera makes very effective recording

material. Puccini, following Prevost's novel pretty closely, has divided his opera into four acts, each act setting forth a single scene. The plot is not a complicated one, and the action consequently is easy to follow. The music lacks the finish and polish of the later Puccini; there are crudities here and there, and the orchestration is occasionally unnecessarily blatant. The melodies, too, are often banal. But for all that the music has life and bounce, and is not lacking in power and effectiveness. The whole opera, in short, is very entertaining and enjoyable, making for a highly agreeable, if not profounding moving, couple of hours.

The cast for this recording is distributed as follows: Manon Lescaut, Maria Zamboni; Lescaut, Lorenzo Conati; The Chevalier des Grieux, Francesco Merli; Geronte de Ravoir, Attilio Bordonali; Edmondo, Giuseppe Nessi; The Innkeeper, Aristide Baracchi; A Singer, Anna Masetti Bassi; The Dancing Master, Giuseppe Nessi; A Lamp Lighter, Giuseppe Nessi; Sergeant of the Royal Archers, Aristide Baracchi; A Captain in the Navy, Natale Villa.

The cast works together extremely well, and the singing is on a consistently high level. Maria Zamboni's Manon is sung with skill and taste; her voice is pleasing, and she uses it intelligently. She is the star of this recording. Francesco Merli's Des Grieux and Lorenzo Conati's Lescaut are both satisfactory but not remarkable. The other members of the cast acquit themselves honorably but without any special distinction. The Scala Chorus contributes some stirring choral work, and the Milan Symphony, under Molajoli's experienced hand, provides its usual fine orchestral accompaniment. And the recording throughout is beyond cavil.

Giordano's *Fedora*, in recorded form, is much less attractive than *Manon Lescaut*, though this is not the fault of the recording engineers, who perform their duties with their customary proficiency, nor with the artists engaged to record the opera, who do very well with the inconsequential material given them to work with. The reason for this is to be sought in the music itself. It is commonplace, vulgar and undistinguished, filled with obvious and tawdry effects. The whole thing, indeed, is highly superficial and insipid and hardly seems worthy the careful attention it receives here.

Set to a text by Colautti after Sardou's drama, the opera was first performed in 1898 in Milan, achieving a success that must puzzle hearers of this set. Eight years later it was heard at the Metropolitan. The cast for this recording is distributed as follows: Fedora Romazov, Gilda Dalla Rizza; Loris Ipanov, Antonio Melandri; De Siriex, Emilio Ghirardini; Olga Sukarev, Luba Mirella; Grech, Corrado Zambelli; Cirillo, Ernesto Dominici; Dimitri, Ebe Ticozzi; Piccolo Savojardo, Ida Mannarini; Desiré, Piero Girardi; Barone Rouvel, Piero Girardi; Lorek, Eugenio Dall'Argine; Borov, Eugenio Dall'Argine; Nicola, Blando Giusti; Sergio, Antonio Alfieri; Boleslao Lazinski, Bernardo de Plaisant. The chorus, of course, is that of La Scala, Milan, and the orchestra the Milan Symphony under Molajoli.

The performance is a satisfactory one. The *Fedora* is not altogether pleasing; her voice, in the higher register, frequently has a piercing quality that is extremely unpleasant. But all in all, the rendition of the work is a good one and can be recommended, though not with any particular enthusiasm, to anyone who cares



to have the opera in complete form. The orchestral playing is of a high standard throughout, and the choral parts are in competent hands. The recording, like that in *Manon Lescaut*, does ample justice to the work and the performance . . . Occupying the odd side of the set is an orchestral excerpt from the same composer's opera *Siberia*. It is well-played and recorded but is pretty dreary stuff.

**WAGNER
R. STRAUSS**
V-DB1543
IMPORTED

DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 1—*Ansprache des Pogner*. (Wagner) Alexander Kipnis (Bass) with Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Erich Orthmann. One side and
DER ROSENKAVALIER: Act 2 — *Herr Kavalier* (Letter Scene and Waltz). (R. Strauss) One side. Alexander Kipnis (Bass) and E. Ruziczka (Mezzo-Soprano) with Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Erich Orthmann.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.50.

WAGNER
V-D2001
IMPORTED

DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 2 — *Gut'n Abend, Meister!* (Duet: Sachs and Eva). Two sides. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and Gota Ljungberg (Soprano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lawrance Collingwood.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

V-C2255
IMPORTED

DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 2—*Jerum! Jerum!* (*Schusterlied*). One side and
DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 3—*Verachtet mir die Meister Nicht*. One side. Rudolf Bockelmann (Bass-Baritone) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

V-D2000
IMPORTED

DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 3—*Abendlich glühend*. One side and
DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 3—*Euch macht ihr's leicht*. One side. Lauritz Melchior (Tenor) and Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) with London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Heger. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

V-D2002
IMPORTED

DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 3—*Aha! Da streicht die Lene schon um's Haus*. One side and
DIE MEISTERSINGER: Act 3—*Quintet—Selig, wie die Sonne meines Glückes*. One side. Schumann (Soprano), Melchior (Tenor), Schorr (Baritone), Parr (Soprano), Williams (Tenor) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The *Meistersinger* records are reviewed in the article "‘Die Meistersinger’ on Records," printed elsewhere in this issue. Done fairly recently, they enjoy all the benefits that modern recording can bestow upon them. What an unflinching joy a complete *Meistersinger* recorded and rendered with such competence would be!

The *Rosenkavalier* is another opera that ought to be recorded in complete form, though it cannot be said that the prospects of our getting such a set anytime soon are very bright. The Letter Scene, which concludes Act 2, is given on the reverse side of the first of the *Meistersinger* discs listed above. It is altogether charming. Annina has delivered the letter to Baron Ochs. Unable to find his glasses and unwilling to let her search for them, Ochs gives her the letter to read aloud. It contains exciting news. Mariandel, the chambermaid, has fallen wildly in love with him and seeks an appointment. Ochs, always enterprising in such matters, is immensely pleased. Against the beautiful orchestral background, consisting mostly of ravishing waltzes, Kipnis and Ruzicka give a delightful account of themselves. The recording is flawless.



**MASCAGNI
DENZA**
V-8222

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA: *Brindisi—Viva il Vino spumeg-
giante.* (Mascagni) Beniamino Gigli (Tenor) with Metropoli-
tan Opera Chorus and Metropolitan Opera House Orchestra
conducted by Giulio Setti. One side and
OCCHI TURCHINI. (Denza) One side. Beniamino Gigli
(Tenor) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.50.

Issued in the expensive 8000 series, it is only natural that much should be expected of this disc. The rousing *Cavalleria* drinking song really is superbly done, as well it should be, considering the absurd price charged. The Metropolitan Chorus sings beautifully, and Gigli's efforts will gratify his admirers. The whole thing is flawlessly recorded . . . On the reverse side there is plenty of fancy shouting, but whether it is worth the equally fancy price remains highly dubious. There are quite a few extremely attractive ways in which to dispose of \$2.50 these days.

ORGAN



BACH
V-C2148
IMPORTED

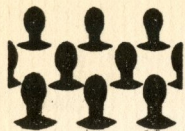
TOCCATA AND FUGUE in C. Two sides. G. D. Cunning-
ham (Organ). One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Organ recording, though now and then a specimen offering evidence to the contrary appears, has yet some distance to travel before it can be ranked with recording of the orchestra and small instrumental bodies. The present disc is one of the less successful examples. The volume is poorly distributed, and there isn't sufficient clarity.

**WAGNER
WIDOR**
C-50308D

DIE WALKÜRE: *Ride of the Valkyries.* (Wagner) One side
and
SYMPHONY NO. 5: *Toccata in F.* (Widor) One side. Quen-
tin M. Maclean (Organ). One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The recording is excellent, and those who want the well-known Ride in an organ version will find this a satisfactory one. The Widor Toccata is well-done.



CHORAL

GREGORIAN

C-DHX6

to

C-DHX9

and

C-DH42

and

C-DH43

IMPORTED

GREGORIAN MELODIES: *Dominus Dixit Ad Me; In Spendoribus; Puer Natus Est; Christus Factus Est; Plange; Ecce Lignum Crucis; Hagios Ho Theos; Alleluia, Confitemini Domino; Alleluia, Laudate Dominum; Vesperae Autem Sabbati; Haec Dies; Victimae Paschali; Dominus Dixit Ad Me; In Spendoribus; Puer Natus Est; Spiritus Domini; Veni Sancte Spiritus.* Twelve sides. Franciscans of Venray, Holland, conducted by Eliseus Bruning.

Four 12-inch discs. \$2 each. Two 10-inch discs. \$1 each. ~~\$10.00~~

The discussions going on in the press in regard to Schönberg and the ultra-moderns lead one to wish that there were some universally recognized principles on which to base a reasonable judgment. Perhaps it might help if we all realized that artistic music, as we occidentals know it in the second quarter of the twentieth century, is the result of a long development lasting for many centuries.

European music did not begin with Bach, strange as the statement may seem to some. Bach was possible only because men had worked at music for hundreds of years before his time. Neither did this development begin with the contrapuntists of the Middle Ages. They had a problem to solve in some respects even more difficult than ours. They solved it. They in their turn, however, built on a foundation handed over to them by their predecessors of the preceding Gregorian period.

The trouble is that for what went on before Bach our knowledge is scanty, uncertain, and often downright erroneous. It is obtained from books, and since music cannot be turned into words, it is no exaggeration to say that for most people European music of the first seventeen hundred years of the Christian era is unknown. The prodigious creative activity of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produced a magnificent result; so magnificent, in fact, that it has made us forget what was accomplished in former times. But there is nothing new in that phenomenon. The music of the Middle Ages blotted out of men's minds the art of the preceding era. In Palestrina's time Gregorian was a lost art. The musicians of the sixteenth century did not know how to sing it.

In recent years it has been resurrected at the cost of great labor and study. This collection represents a very small portion of the results of that work. The records were made by a choir of Franciscans of Venray, Holland, under the direction of Dr. Eliseus Bruning, O. F. M. The choir is evidently well-trained and well-directed in this particular style. The legato is good, the rhythm is clear, the dynamics are well-done, the ensemble is well-nigh perfect. The tone quality, perhaps, leaves something to be desired, but that is to be expected in a choir of this kind. To this listener the tempo seems a trifle too fast and occasionally the small phrases seem to be shaded off too much, to the detriment of the long, melodic line. But, of course, judgments of that kind depend so much on the per-

sonal equation that their objective value is open to question.



Melodies such as the *Haec Dies* or the *Christus Factus Est* in this collection may seem strange to the listener, if he is accustomed only to the forms and tonality of modern music and has not been interested in the recent experiments looking towards emancipation from the perfect cadence. Here there is no question of anything but a lack of familiarity. The European ear accepted these beautiful melodies for a thousand years and gets back to them without much effort. It may also be suggested that, in spite of what we read about them in histories and magazine articles, they are not "stiff," or "barbarous," or "unrhythmic," or "vague." They have a form of their own, it is true, a free rhythm that is familiar enough in good prose, and a definite, beautiful melodic line that leaves on the listener a definite, musical impression.

JAMES A. BOYLAN

**HANDEL
FOOTE**

V-36043

WHERE'ER YOU WALK. (Handel-Spross) One side and
BEDOUIN SONG. (Arthur Foote) One side. Associated Glee
Clubs of America (1000 Male Voices).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

This disc, setting forth the efforts of one thousand male voices, was recorded during an actual performance in New York. That the microphone is constantly getting more sensitive and capable is afforded testimony by this record. To get one thousand voices on a phonograph record is surely no small accomplishment, and, further, to do it so skilfully that the disc reproduces extraordinarily well is even more remarkable. The recording is very clear and full, and even the words, so often lost in choral recordings, come out far better than in a good many choral records of much smaller organizations. The Handel number is well known, and it is pleasant to note that Arthur Foote's *Bedouin Song* occupies the reverse side. Born in Salem, Mass., in 1853, Foote was educated at Harvard. His entire musical training was received in this country, and he has written in practically all vocal and instrumental forms except opera. The record in every respect is a considerable achievement.

BRAHMS

PA-E11138

IMPORTED

A GERMAN REQUIEM: *Ye Now Are Sorrowful*. Two sides.
Emmy Bettendorf (Soprano) with chorus and orchestra con-
ducted by O. Dobrindt. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Excerpts from the Brahms *German Requiem* were reviewed on page 275 of the September, 1930, issue of *Disques*. The complete work should be recorded, especially now that choral recording has progressed to a point where a large chorus can be fairly successfully reproduced. In the meantime, an excellent idea of the work can be obtained from the recorded excerpts. This one by Emmy Bettendorf is beautifully rendered. The air, *Ye Now Are Sorrowful*, was not included in the first performances of the *Requiem*, but was added later. It is lovely music, and the singing by both chorus and soloist is always pleasing. The recording is very fine throughout the disc.

RCA Victor Announces Musical Masterpiece Series

Debussy Album. *Nuages, La Cathédrale Engloutie, Danses Sacrée et Profane.* Performed by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on four double-faced 12-inch Victor Records, Nos. 7453-7456 . . . in automatic sequence, Nos. 7457-7460. In Album M-116 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$8.00.

The lover of modern music has a rare treat in store in this superb recording of Selected Works by Debussy which Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra have made. Among the many interpretations for which this conductor is famous his readings of Debussy are prominent . . . and with such artists as the principals of his orchestra in the solo parts, the result is certain to be perfection. If the works of this composer have a definite message for you you will want this album . . . and as a means of becoming acquainted with his music, you could scarcely hope for a better introduction.

Symphony No. 3 in E Flat Major Opus 55 (Eroica) by Beethoven. Performed by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Willem Mengelberg, on seven double-faced Victor Records, Nos. 7439-7445 . . . in automatic sequence, Nos. 7446-7452. In Album M-115, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$14.00.

This symphony, which Beethoven dedicated to Napoleon, was his favorite of all the compositions he wrote in this form. Its heroic purport impresses one more and more deeply with each hearing. Willem Mengelberg and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra have recorded it splendidly . . . stirringly . . . eloquently. Of particular beauty is the *Funeral March* in which the plaintive voice of the oboe sings a poignant melody. A record collection which does not include this nobly reproduced work is as incomplete as the library in which a volume of Shakespeare is missing!

RED SEAL RECORDS

Mah Lindy Lou (Strickland) and
Gwine to Hebb'n (Wolfe) Sung by
John Charles Thomas on Victor Record,
No. 1544. List price, \$1.50.

Flying Dutchman — Spinning Song
(Wagner-Liszt) Played by Ignace
Jan Paderewski on Victor Record,
No. 1549. List price, \$1.50.

Cavalleria Rusticana—Brindisi and
Occhi turchini (Pagliara-Denza) Sung
by Beniamino Gigli (the former as-

sisted by Chorus of the Metropolitan
Company) on Victor Record, No.
8222. List price, \$2.50.

Cavatina (Raff) and
Serenade (Schubert) Played by Mischa
Elman on Victor Record, No. 7461.
List price, \$2.00.

Fiddle and I (Weatherly-Goodeve) and
Angel's Serenade (Braga) Sung by
Hulda Lashanska on Victor Record,
No. 1548. List price, \$1.50.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

A Radio Corporation of America Subsidiary

VOCAL



STOTHART
V-1550

CUBAN LOVE SONG. (Stothart-Fields-McHugh) One side and
TRAMPS AT SEA. (Stothart-Fields-McHugh) One side.
Lawrence Tibbett (Baritone) with piano accompaniment by
Stewart Wille. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

**STRICKLAND
WOLFE**
V-1544

MAH LINDY LOU. (Strickland) One side and
GWINE TO HEBB'N: *A Negro Sermon in Rhythm*. (Clement
Wood-Jacques Wolfe) One side. John Charles Thomas (Bari-
tone) with piano accompaniment by Lester Hodges.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

**WEATHERLY
BRAGA**
V-1548

FIDDLE AND I. (Weatherly-Arthur Goodeve) One side and
ANGEL'S SERENADE. (Millard-Braga) One side. Hulda
Lashanska (Soprano) with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Though there are pretty well authenticated rumors that vocal records do not today sell as well as once they did, one would never suspect it from the current RCA Victor list, which offers all three of the above discs. The Tibbett record contains two numbers from his latest film, "The Cuban Love Song," now being shown throughout the country. Tibbett's voice and the skill with which he employs it are so good that he makes the commonplace material with which he is provided attractive. He is given admirable piano accompaniment by Stewart Wille, and the recording is all that could be desired . . . The John Charles Thomas disc is somewhat superior to his first Victor record issued a few months back. *Ma Lindy Lou* is familiar, and he sings it admirably. Recording and accompaniment are excellent. The "Negro Sermon in Rhythm" is effective, and Thomas renders it skilfully. This sort of thing, done in the authentic manner, can be gotten from the various Race lists of the local companies, and if the Race list artists lack Thomas' skill and polish, they more than make up for it in fervor and enthusiasm . . . *Fiddle and I* and *Angel's Serenade* are intended for a certain audience, and that audience will find Hulda Lashanska's latest disc greatly to its liking. There is a saccharine orchestral accompaniment for both pieces.

BRAHMS
PD-90177
IMPORTED

MINNELIED, Op. 71, No. 5. One side and
STÄNDCHEN, Op. 106, No. 1. One side. Heinrich Schlusnus
(Baritone) with piano accompaniment by Franz Rupp.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The *Minnelied* is No. 5 of the five songs that comprise Op. 71, composed in 1876 and published the following year. *Ständchen*, No. 1 of the five songs that comprise Op. 106, dates from the late eighties and was published in 1889. Schlusnus sings them superbly, and the capable Franz Rupp supplies his customary fine accompaniment. The recording is satisfactory.



Recent Outstanding Recordings

90161	{	BACH —BRANDENBURG CONCERTO NO. 3—G Major THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER, Conductor	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$3.00
90162				
Album 25	{	BEETHOVEN —SYMPHONY NO. 5—C Minor, Op. 67 STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN RICHARD STRAUSS, Conductor	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$6.00 Complete with Album
90172				
90175 incl.				
90201	{	WAGNER —TRISTAN AND ISOLDE—Prelude and Liebestod THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER, Conductor	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$3.00
90202				
90171	{	WAGNER —DIE MEISTERSINGER—Am stillen Herd and Preislied ALFRED PICCAVER, Tenor	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
Album 33	{	FRANK —SYMPHONY IN D MINOR LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$6.00 Complete with Album
90197				
90200 incl.				
90176	{	D'INDY —SYMPHONY FOR ORCHESTRA AND PIANO ON A FRENCH MOUNTAIN AIR—Op. 25, Finale JEANNE-MARIE DARRÉ—LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
90196	{	WEINBERGER —SCHWANDA, DER DUDELSACKPFEIFER— Fantasia OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN-CHARLOTTENBURG ALOIS MELICHAR, Conductor	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
85006	{	STRAUSS —TRAUM DURCH DIE DÄMMERUNG and FREUNDLICHE VISION HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS, Baritone	}	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.25

Brunswick Records

BRUNSWICK RECORD CORPORATION

1776 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y.

BRANCHES AND DISTRIBUTORS IN PRINCIPAL CITIES

**TOSTI
MARTINI**
C-G4058M

A SONG OF FAREWELL. (Tosti) One side and
PLAISIR D'AMOUR. (Martini) One side. Richard Tauber
(Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Ernst Hauke.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.



**SCHUMANN
WAGNER**
C-G4059M

WIDMUNG. (Schumann) One side and
SCHMERZEN. (Wagner) One side. Lotte Lehmann
(Soprano) with orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Tosti selection is trite, but the Martini *Plasir d'Amour* is, as usual, charming. It has been recorded pretty frequently, but there is room for a version as well-sung as Tauber's. The orchestra and recording are satisfactory . . . The Lotte Lehmann disc, setting forth songs by Schumann and Wagner, is beautifully sung, but the orchestral accompaniment is rather coarse.

R. STRAUSS
B-85006

FREDUNDLICHE, Op. 48, No. 1. One side and
TRAUM DURCH DIE DÄMMERUNG, Op. 29, No. 1. One
side. Heinrich Schlusnus (Baritone) with piano accompaniment by Franz Rupp. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

**WOLF
BACH**
B-85007

WEYLA'S CHANT. (Hugo Wolf) One side and
AVE MARIA. (Bach-Gounod) One side. Karin Branzell (Contralto) with orchestral accompaniment. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Schlusnus discs are already so well-known and so highly esteemed that it is useless to say much about this latest release, save that it is one of his best. The accompaniment, by Dr. Franz Rupp, and the recording are excellent. . . . It is too bad that the Wolf song should be grouped with the Bach-Gounod selection. A recording of the latter is not badly needed. An orchestra supplies the accompaniment for the Wolf, while Manfred Gurlitt directs the accompaniment for the Bach-Gounod, which also has a violin solo played by Wilhelm Thomas. The recording is well-done.

VIOLIN



**SCHUBERT
RAFF**
V-7461

SERENADE. (Schubert) One side and
CAVATINA. (Raff) One side. Mischa Elman (Violin) with
piano accompaniment. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

If there really is still a large public for this sort of thing, no artist caters to it more assiduously than Mischa Elman. The Schubert *Serenade* has been recorded pretty often, but it is hard to cavil at another version when it is done as well as this one is. But the Raff *Cavatina* scarcely needed to be recorded again. The record is carefully turned out.

COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS*

—New Issues—

MEDELSSOHN: SYMPHONY NO. 4, IN A MAJOR (ITALIAN) OP. 90.

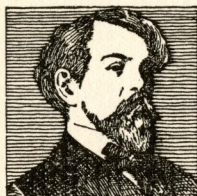
Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony is one of the most perennially charming of all of the longer instrumental pieces. It is instinct with life, melody and gaiety. It is simply music to be listened to and enjoyed. Sir George Grove, editor of the famous musical dictionary, said of it, "the Music itself is better than any commentary. Let that be marked, learned and inwardly digested."

The writing of this symphony was probably commenced in Rome, where Mendelssohn arrived early in 1831, after a sojourn in England and Scotland where he had gathered inspiration for his other famous Symphony, the "Scotch," in A Minor. The famous finale (after the old Italian dance form of the saltarello) is undoubtedly an echo of the Roman Carnival of 1831, in the gaiety of which Mendelssohn participated with abandon.



MASTERWORKS SET NO. 167

Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4, in A Major (Italian) Op. 90. Sir Hamilton Harty and Hallé Orchestra. In Six Parts, on Three Twelve-Inch Records. \$4.50 with Album.



DEBUSSY: PRÉLUDE À L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE. This record is already celebrated, having won the Grand Prix, or grand prize, in a contest run by a newspaper in Paris, the object of which is to provide annual recognition of premier achievements in recorded art. This work, as recorded by Columbia, was awarded the first prize in all classes as the greatest triumph of the year.

Few nowadays are unacquainted with Debussy's highly impressionistic "Afternoon of a Faun," that shimmering classic which was the real precursor of the modernist tendency in music. For his inspiration Debussy went to a poem by the French poet Mallarmé, which depicts the thoughts, between waking and dreaming, of a faun, of the old mythology, as he drowns through a sunlit after-

noon on the bank of a river in ancient Greece. This short but highly distinguished work, it is safe to say, will ever remain a masterpiece.

Debussy: Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune. Walther Straram and Orchestre des Concerts Straram. In Two Parts on One Twelve-Inch Record, 68010-D, \$1.50.

WAGNER: SIEGFRIED IDYL. In strong contrast to much of Wagner's other music is that exquisite lullaby, the Siegfried Idyl, arranged by the German master from material existing in the "Ring" music dramas and first played as an aubade to his wife and infant son on Christmas morning 1870. Ernest Newman, the famous English critic, says of it, "This is not an individual father musing over his child's cradle but all nature crooning a song of love for its little ones."

While Wagner wrote into the Siegfried Idyl little that was new in thematic material, the consummate musical craftsmanship displayed in the arrangement is forever outstanding and admirable. Many recordings of this have been issued, some by us in the past, but such a sympathetic and gracious reading of it as is here given by Bruno Walter has seldom been heard.

Wagner: Siegfried Idyl. Bruno Walter and Symphony Orchestra. In Four Parts on Two Twelve-Inch Records, 68011-D and 68012-D. Each, \$2.00.



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"Magic Notes"



CORRESPONDENCE



The Long-Playing Records

Editor, *Disques*:

Thanks for your frank comments on the demerits of some of the new long-playing records. Perhaps, as you suggest, their flaws will some day soon be ironed out. But there is another matter concerning the long-players that I should like to have discussed. This is the question of hashing together a lot of miscellaneous music on one record and compelling the purchaser to take the whole lot or nothing. The companies have always had a theory that *O Sole Mio* on one four-minute side would help sell *Wohin' nun Tristan scheidet* on the other, to exaggerate a bit. What are they going to do with thirty-two minutes for their playtoy? The imagination recoils! Why should I have to pay for and store Suk's *Fairy Tale* and Dvorák's hackneyed *Slavonic Dance* in order to get the *Carneval Overture*? As long as the one is available without the other, you can bet I shall not buy the whole thing, especially when prices begin to come down in the field of standard records. But if the older records are abandoned, how many *Ave Marias* and *Who Is Sylvia* am I going to have to have around the house in order to get some of Schubert's less well-known lieder? I don't know what the answer is; perhaps four- and six-inch records. But such a suggestion is, I suppose, Bolshevism.

Before the companies get altogether set in their ways, I should like to make another suggestion, which applies particularly to the long-players, but also to the standard records: to wit, that blank spaces with a single connecting groove be provided to separate the movements of a symphony, concerto, etc. People will sometimes want to play the second movement of Stokowski's new Fifth without first going through what precedes; e.g., I am annoyed right now at having to play through the Chopin preludes four to six in order to show off the seventh. Lots of us would like to have the option.

Until perfection appears around the corner, many of us, as you suggest, will prefer better tone quality on short-players to fewer interruptions on long-players. But it is really not necessary for the owner of an electrical phonograph to jump up from his chair and

run across the room to change records. Two devices are currently on the market which enable him to do his record-changing right at his easy chair. One is the Columbia Radiograph, which looks like a small portable but contains an electric motor, turntable, pick-up, and controls, to be connected by a single cable with amplifier and speaker at any distance. The other is a similar mechanism, made by General Electric, but housed in a quite good-looking end-table. The economically-minded can of course remove his present motor, turntable, pick-up, and controls from his cabinet and house them in a cabinet made by his local carpenter, or remodeled from some appropriate small antique. Then with his record cabinet or a pile of favorite discs at one side and his new apparatus at the other, the phonophile can quietly flip his records over every four minutes, keeping one finger on his place in the miniature score, relaxed in his easy chair, and grinning at the boobies who have once more fallen for the "latest-model" racket.

Incidentally, if the long-players are still imperfect, why have they been put on the market (at \$125 to—would you believe it in this year of grace—\$995)? Why doesn't RCA-Victor do its experimenting in its laboratories instead of in its customers' homes and pocket-books? I should really and truly like to see the official answer to this question.

PAUL LEWINSON

Swarthmore, Pa.

Editor, *Disques*:

The December issue of *Disques* arrived today and I'm really glad to note that at last you state that all is not perfection with the program transcriptions. From the highly optimistic remarks in previous issues I was forced to believe that you had abandoned your worthy policy of honest criticism, even at the expense of business.

Perhaps you remember a few months back I wrote and prophesied that there would be a great dearth of high frequencies, much needle scratch and unfortunate things in the neighborhood of the bass. After listening to these records I find that I am quite right on every count. The needle scratch is there, though filtered out, along with such few high

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THESE beautiful compositions that you read of from month to month in the pages of *Disques* are the sort of music you'll never tire of; the music you will be proud to include in your record library . . . Many of them are foreign importations played by such famous organizations as London Symphony and La Scala orchestras as well as the leading American musical organizations . . . All recordings listed—whether by Victor, Columbia, Polydor, Brunswick, etc.—are available at Lyon & Healy's immediately upon release.

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PHILADELPHIA, PA., U. S. A.

Correspondence (Continued)

notes as still remain. Let me add here that it is still an impossibility to record excellent highs at $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. Furthermore and what is worse, it is impossible to compensate the amplifier for this lamentable deficiency. And now the bass—an indefinite rumble, comparable to the very first orthophonic recordings of Victor (*March Slav*, *Soldier's Chorus* and the like) . . .

Then the matter of speed reduction from 78 to $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. I doubted whether this simple, inexpensive "gear shift" would be practical. In the first place the average commercial motor, revolving at 78 and controlled by a governor of a mechanical nature, usually has a speed variation of several percent which is quite noticeable to a sensitive ear. When Western Electric made $33\frac{1}{3}$ Vitaphone records I tried various types of speed reducers and found that while the variation at 78 was tolerable for average ears, at the low speed it became acutely objectionable. My solution was a synchronous motor of absolutely constant speed geared down with a special gear box to the proper speed. Western Electric goes even a step further and utilizes a vacuum tube speed control which keeps the speed constant within $1/20$ th of 1%.

Let me conclude by saying that even though common sense told me that the transcriptions couldn't be so very good, hope still sprang eternal in this human breast and I was just as disappointed when I heard them as if I hadn't known. There was still a little spark which said—"Well *maybe* Victor will spring a surprise and do something I don't expect." But no! And let me add, before I close, that transcribing a recording from the 78 to the $33\frac{1}{3}$ cannot *possibly* result in any improvement over the original, even under ideal conditions. It may some day (I hope) be possible to make them just as good. But the other is just as impossible as for a record of a singer's voice to be an improvement over the singer himself.

LEONARD COHN

York, Pa.

Editor, *Disques*:

You may be interested in the reactions of one of your readers to the new Victor program transcriptions. My experiments with them have been with the Beethoven Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, the Rachmaninoff performance of the Chopin Sonata, the *Pinafore*

records and the Schubert records by McCormack and Shilkret. The instrument used is a Victor Radio-Electrola, two models removed from the present new line (RE-45).

Of course, it was necessary to reduce the turntable speed by turning the governor regulator so that the motor rotated at approximately 33 to 34 revolutions per minute; the exact $33\frac{1}{3}$ was probably impossible for me to accomplish.

I can unhesitatingly say that my machine is incomparably better adapted to play the standard 78 r.p.m. records than it is to reproduce the transcriptions. Ample proof of this was discovered in playing the Casals Fourth on the Electrola in both the 78 and $33\frac{1}{3}$ versions. At first, I thought this was due to the fact that in the "dubbing" process the sound level was necessarily reduced. However, the Stokowski Fifth, the only record of the set recorded direct for long-players, likewise suffered immeasurably in loss of tone, so that it was impossible to get full body from the reproduction—something very easily obtained from any electrical recording in my large collection. The piano tone in the Rachmaninoff (and also in the Viennese Waltz sections of the Schubert records) left much to be desired the greater part of the time, and at no time was as satisfactory as that secured from 78 versions.

Of course, I used the orange chromium needles and was scrupulous to observe all warnings concerning replacement. These needles broke down badly in less than two hours' continuous playing and new ones were substituted. That this is not the fault of the records or pick-up was proved by the absence of fuzzy tone which led to the abandonment of the offending needle. A warning to all readers who may be tempted to do what I did. Do not under any circumstances attempt to start a long-player in the middle of the recorded surface. I tried to do this with the result that the record failed to rotate properly and the lacquer surface was worn off. Each time I play this particular record now, a violent hissing results each time the pick-up reaches the damaged part, the pick-up drags and the turntable hesitates. Of course, the new Victor machine with its motor designed for efficient performance at $33\frac{1}{3}$ may not impose this hazard on gramophiles.

While the volume of tone (or rather the lack of it) may be compensated for in the

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Correspondence (Continued)

removal of many trips for changing records, there is another defect I noted which perhaps others may agree upon. It is my distinct feeling that the groove walls are so infinitesimally thin as to be too frail. Result? When I place the needle in the first groove of the Stokowski Fifth, there is an "anticipation" of the opening chords. It sounds something like this "da-da-da—DA-DA-DADUM." Of course, the "da-das" quoted in lower case are faint. But not so faint as to be imperceptible. Comparable other examples can be quoted. For instance, a duet by Ralph and Josephine in *Pinafore* where a high sustained note is "echoed" after the singers release it. This is not an acoustic echo due to the hall in which the music is recorded. It is quite obviously a breaking down of the groove-wall. These records were played only a few times before this phenomena, never before noted on standard records, became evident. Have you or any of your readers noticed it?

Unquestionably, the transcriptions will be improved. Certainly, they will have to be, for I, for one, most assuredly will not pay \$4.50 for a Stokowski record and find after a few playings that it gives me preludes and epilogues which Beethoven did not write into the music and which Stokowski and his men did not play.

Too, where is this "ingenious" little gadget which Victor promised would make the junking of the present machine unnecessary? We were told that an astonishing little piece of mechanism could be installed at a reasonably moderate cost which would gear-shift the turntable motor instantly from 78 to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ at will. No dealer I have contacted knows anything about it. Personally, I think it is impossible to adapt a governor-controlled motor to a gear-shift without remodelling the motor entirely. I suppose we next will be told that to retain our old (and incidentally highly reliable and desirable) machines, it will be necessary for us to fit them out with a new turn-table.

However, even if I am willing to go to the expense of installing a two-speed motor or investing in a new Victor, can the transcriptions be guaranteed to provide the brilliance and volume which standard records produce? Can they be guaranteed to stand up under many playings? These are questions which it would be wise for every prospective pur-

chaser of transcriptions to ask himself.

Frankly, I think the idea is too ambitious—that it is asking too much of a 12-inch record to crowd 15 minutes of music or other sounds on one surface. A standard 12-inch, playing at 78 r.p.m., contains 4 minutes of music. There are approximately 312 grooves. If the grooves were not narrowed, the standard record at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ speed would play more than 9 minutes. This would cover practically every single symphonic movement in musical literature or, at the most, require but a single "break" for turnover to the B side. This, I think, is preferable to the purchase of expensive transcriptions which are unplayable after ordinary—or less than ordinary—use. Just why it was necessary to break the Andante in the Stokowski Fifth is beyond me, especially with the hoop-la that was aroused about "complete movements without a break." Then the first transcription made direct finds a movement broken and I do not agree with reviewers who say it is not annoying. It is.

Perhaps I am very sour and captious about this latest production of our finest phonograph minds. I realize we will probably have to go through the Middle-Ages of transcriptions just as we did with electrical recording. But I can still play and enjoy that ancient recording by Weingartner and Columbia of the *Fantastic Symphony after seven years*. Will I be able to play Casals' Fourth Symphony transcription in 1938? You answer it.

WILLIAM J. FAGAN

Brooklyn, N. Y.

A Correction

Editor, *Disques*:

In your November issue, speaking of the record of Songs of the Auvergne, your reviewer speaks of Canteloube as "the composer of two operas, *Le Mas* and *Chants d'Auvergne*." The latter is not an opera, but a collection of songs, obviously the collection from which the present songs are taken. I have not heard the record, but the book is in the New York Public Library and the various titles as given in the record review are in the table of contents.

PHILIP L. MILLER

Brooklyn, N. Y.

BOOKS

SCHUMANN: *A Life of Suffering*. By Victor Basch. Translated from the French by Catherine Alison Phillips. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.50.

SCHUMANN'S CONCERTED CHAMBER MUSIC. By J. A. Fuller-Maitland. London: Oxford University Press. 75c.

These two books, both about the same composer, have little in common. The Basch volume deals almost exclusively with Schumann the man, the Fuller-Maitland with Schumann the composer of chamber music. The subtitle of the first indicates the general trend of this rather over-written narrative. None will deny the author that Schumann lived a fairly unhappy life. The formidable obstacles he had to overcome in order to marry Clara Wieck; the reluctance with which the vast majority of his contemporaries accepted him as a composer; the difficulty with which he adjusted himself to the dull routine of daily life; his excessive romanticism, amounting at times to no more than a somewhat sticky and mawkish sentimentality; his high-strung, extremely sensitive nature, enabling him one moment to soar grandly and the next to consider suicide—all this, ending finally in insanity, did not make Schumann the happiest of men. But the history of genius is largely a history of misery, and so it is hard to feel more than ordinary sympathy for Schumann.

The author, who is professor of aesthetics at the University of Paris, is here not greatly interested in Schumann's musical compositions and attempts no discussion of them. Nor does he attempt to probe into the man's inner life, beyond a few superficial hints here and there that are not especially revealing; the outward events content him. His book, indeed, is based entirely upon the two volumes of Schumann's *Jugendbriefe* (*Youthful Letters*), various other correspondence, and the diary of Robert and Clara Schumann. He quotes liberally from these documents, fills in enough to make the story flow evenly and logically—and calls it a day. The book is readable, but that is about the most flattering thing one can say of it. It is competently translated, and at the end there is an index to Schumann's works and also one of names.

The Fuller-Maitland volume is published in the admirable Musical Pilgrim series,

printed in England and issued in this country by Carl Fischer, Inc., and so is considerably shorter than the Basch biography. It discusses with shrewdness and skill the various duets, the trios, quartets and the Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 44. Here we are asked to shed no tears over Schumann's misfortunes, but we are given sound and revealing notes on the music.

JOSEPH HAYDN: *An Introduction*. By D. G. A. Fox. London: Oxford University Press. 75c.

THE ROSE CAVALIER. By Eric Blom. London: Oxford University Press. 75c.

Both of these volumes, like the Fuller-Maitland Schumann book noticed above, belong in the Musical Pilgrim series, edited by Sir Arthur Somervell. The Blom book on Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* was reviewed in this place in the issue of last February. A wholly admirable piece of work, it is a model of what such things should be. Mr. Blom writes clearly and forcefully. The book on Haydn, too, is praiseworthy. Three of the symphonies, *The Creation* and four string quartets are submitted to a searching analysis. This volume and the Blom *Rosenkavalier* study are available through Carl Fischer, Inc.

WOZZECK: *A Guide to the Words and Music of the Opera by Alban Berg*. By Willi Reich. New York: *The League of Composers*. 75c.

This useful guide, which forms the second of the monographs to be issued by the quarterly magazine, *Modern Music*, appeared last November, when Stokowski and the Philadelphia Grand Opera Company gave Berg's work in both Philadelphia and New York. It contains a brief discussion of Berg, the manner in which he adapted Büchner's drama to musical purposes, an analysis of the individual scenes of the opera and of the music, a history of the opera, and a table of the principal themes. It is very helpful and illuminating.

